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ABSTRACT

A collection of essays on Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States addresses these topics: the schools, their curricula, and organization (Theresa Hsu Chao); school administration and management (Chao, Lydia Chen, Edward Chang); academic curriculum (Pay-Fen Serena Wang); non-heritage Chinese learners: practices and implications (Ming Lee); extracurricular activities (Suray H. Lee, Chang-Yu Miao); Chinese language summer camps for students (Cathy E-Ling Chai); short-term professional development for teachers (Yu-Ming Peng); obtaining credit from local school districts (Rae Shae Chen); awarding credit through testing: the case of the San Francisco (California) Unified School District (Ju-Ching Liu); issues and recommendations for improving Chinese language schools (Shu-han Chou Wang); optimizing unique opportunities for learning (Martha Wang Gallagher); and forging a link: Chinese heritage community language schools and the formal education system (Xueying Wang). (MSE)

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A VIEW from

A CASE STUDY OF CHINESE HERITAGE

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Edited by Xueying Wang

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The National Foreign Language Center

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A CASE STUDY OF CHINESE HERITAGE COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Edited by
Xueying Wang

The National Foreign Language Center

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For my dearest daughter Jingya Wang,
and her generation

and

for my mentor and friend, Professor A. Ronald Walton,
for his tireless efforts in support of heritage
community language schools

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Xueying Wang is associate director for projects at The National Foreign Language Center and executive director of the United States-China Education Council. Dr. Wang, who was honored in 1995 as one of the outstanding alumni of the College of Education of the University of Maryland for the last 75 years, has her Ph.D. in Second Language Education from the University of Maryland. For the last few years, she has worked diligently in support of the efforts of the heritage community language schools in the United States.

Foreword

The National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) is pleased to offer its first major publication dedicated to issues of heritage language maintenance and enhancement in the United States. This work makes a new contribution to the NFLC's mission regarding research, policy development, programs, and projects that are focused on the improvement of this country's capacity to meet critical needs for cross-cultural communications competence, particularly in languages other than English.

The NFLC's various publication series provide essential connections between its internal research and programs and the external world of policy formulation and diversified practice. These efforts enable the NFLC to disseminate the results of its research and policy studies; to connect to the broad range of constituencies whose needs, interests, and support are vital to the Center's mission; and thereby to make concrete contributions on a national scale to the understanding of a broad range of language-related issues, and to systemic improvement in foreign language teaching, learning, and maintenance.

The NFLC has long considered the heritage language communities in the United States to be, potentially, the most productive source of true bilingual, bicultural competence in English and the many languages critical to our national interests (particularly in the languages more remote from English). We are greatly concerned by the fact that the contribution these communities can make to the national capacity in languages other than English is undervalued and often overlooked. The maintenance and enhancement of heritage languages are a responsibility undertaken, for the most part, by talented and committed members of local communities, often in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. In recent years, the NFLC has engaged in a number of projects and activities related to issues of heritage language maintenance and enhancement in the United States. *A View from Within* thus represents both the fruition of ongoing NFLC efforts and a new direction in publications. As The National Foreign Language Center continues its research and project agenda that addresses the role of heritage language communities in the context of national language capacity, it is important that we—as well as our national and international constituencies—have a shared understanding of the issues, challenges, and obstacles as seen by those who know them best—the people who commit significant amounts of time, energy, expertise, and love to passing their language and culture on to succeeding generations. Dr. Wang and her colleagues are to be congratulated for their insights, and for allowing us all a view from within of the remarkable enterprise of heritage community language schools.

David Maxwell
Director, NFLC

Preface

The language needs of the United States are changing in the context of a world itself undergoing dramatic transformation. A variety of global issues, ranging from economic growth and international economic competition to the search for political and strategic stability, are redefining our relationships with other societies and cultures. Simultaneously, as the world's most complex multicultural and multilingual society, we are now struggling to understand and define our own interaction with one another domestically. These changing contexts require ever more cross-cultural communication competencies, in an unprecedented array of languages. Yet, even as we stand on the brink of what may be the greatest challenge in our nation's history with regard to the need for language and cultural competencies, our educational institutions—from elementary through post-secondary—are afflicted with increasing demands and diminishing resources.

In an earlier publication (Brecht and Walton, 1995), we argued that our country is facing a genuine crisis in its capacity to meet the language needs of the twenty-first century. We have explored potential responses to this troubling situation, from a rethinking of current language policies to new systems of language instruction and delivery. However, among the concrete steps that the nation can implement immediately, one stands out as both the most promising and the most ignored: taking advantage of the enormous natural language resources available in our heritage communities.

According to the 1990 national census, well over thirty million Americans speak a language other than English at home. Yet, national language education policies seem trapped in the traditional and increasingly questionable pursuit of teaching the members of these communities English as a *replacement* for, rather than as an *addition* to, their first languages. At the same time, we direct limited resources to the much more challenging task of teaching these very same languages to native English speakers. Heritage communities, Chinese heritage communities in this case, are confronted with a frustratingly ironic dilemma: currently, national, state, and local policies mandate teaching English as a second language, while schools and colleges focus almost exclusively on teaching Chinese as a "foreign language" (even to students with some knowledge of the language from home!). Yet, quietly and in the background, the Chinese heritage community language schools, with their own resources and operating completely outside the formal language education system, collectively enroll ten times as many students as the national secondary education system, and three times as many as all the colleges and universities together. In a peculiar way, our national mindset seems to favor the often tortuous, always expensive, and rather illogical effort to re-create a language capacity that already exists in heritage communities throughout the United States.

To say that such a national capacity is within our reach, however, is not to say that we as a nation know how to utilize it in ways that are ideally in the best interest of the heritage communities themselves and at the same time in the interest of our entire society in global and domestic terms. Having paid little attention to the efforts of heritage communities in preserving their languages and cultures, it should not be surprising that we find a great segment of our population unaware of such efforts, that we understand little about how they organize and implement their efforts, and of course, that we understand so very little of the problems these communities face in trying to fulfill their mission.

As this volume has unfolded over the last year, we have become increasingly convinced that it is unique in the literature on language study in the United States, for it addresses these very issues. While there has been considerable scholarly research on the issue of first language preservation in the United States, the present work provides insights into the heritage language schools, a growing and widespread phenomenon, from the inside—from within the heritage community itself. However, the vision behind this publication is even more ambitious, for although it deals with only one language and one heritage community, it is intended as a *case study* of the issues facing heritage community schools and learners on a national scale. We hope that this volume will contribute ultimately to the formal recognition and integration of the heritage language sector as a vital component of our national language capacity.

We are sure that this work will educate and inform but we hope it will do more. We hope that it will reveal a vital but often ignored contribution to the nation's future in pressing matters of language and communication, that it will provoke a change in mindset about language education, and that it will spawn other such works accessible not only to the language specialist, but to a broader audience as well. It is not unreasonable to hope that someday there will be as many articles, as many projects, and as many conferences on the preservation and enhancement of heritage community languages as we now find in the teaching and learning of English and of those "foreign languages" that turn out not to be so "foreign" after all.

Richard D. Brecht
NFLC, Deputy Director

A. Ronald Walton
NFLC, Deputy Director

Reference

Brecht, R. D., and A. R. Walton. 1995. "The Future Shape of Language Learning in the New World of Global Communication: Consequences for Higher Education and Beyond." In *Foreign Language Learning: The Journey of a Lifetime*, ed. R. Donato and R. M. Terry, pp. 110–152. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Acknowledgments

This volume is the first publication of The National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) to focus exclusively on the topic of heritage language preservation and enhancement in the United States, and is the first in a series of works on that topic. This publication is the result of years of cumulative, collaborative work with Chinese heritage community language schools, organized and operated by the Chinese ethnic community outside of the formal education system in the United States.

While attending a teacher training seminar hosted by the Southern California Council of Chinese Schools (SCCCS) in August 1994, the editor was struck by the devotion and commitment of the teachers and administrators of Chinese language schools. With few resources other than volunteer time, these individuals are dedicated to building a genuine school system that, in terms of organization and structure, parallels the formal education system, but with a slightly more narrow focus in terms of content and subject matter. Even more striking is the fact that this effort is so little understood, recognized, and appreciated by most of the general public. In this era of global communication, increasing cross-cultural communication in the United States and a growing awareness of the need for linguistic competence in languages other English, exploring the mission of heritage community language schools, their organizational structure, and curriculum is extremely valuable to language policy makers, language educators, education agencies, funding organizations and foundations. Such a publication can also inform the efforts of heritage community language schools nationwide in languages other than Chinese.

The idea for this publication received the enthusiastic support of Ms. Theresa Hsu Chao, President of the National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools (NCACLS). After a number of discussions with Ms. Chao, a selection of topics was made and representatives of NCACLS' member schools were asked to submit articles. The NFLC and the editor for this publication owe their deepest gratitude to Ms. Chao, the authors, and all of those who participated in and supported this endeavor.

The editor also wishes to express her deepest gratitude to Dr. David Maxwell, Director of The National Foreign Language Center, who not only strongly supported the concept, but also generously provided the funding for this publication. His willingness to serve on the editorial board and his advice are greatly appreciated. His invaluable comments and red marks on the manuscript will always be remembered. Special thanks go to my mentors, Drs. Richard Brecht and Ronald Walton, from whom I have learned more than I could ever learn out of books. For many years, Drs. Brecht and Walton have strongly supported the efforts of heritage community language schools in the United States. As members of the editorial board, both reviewed the manuscript, provided constructive suggestions, and offered valuable advice. I would like to thank Dr. Walton particularly for his guidance and encouragement during the course of the project. His generosity with his time for our discussions on the content of the publication will never be forgotten.

A very special word of thanks goes to the members of the NFLC staff who were involved with this volume. Ms. Marlowe Burke, a former employee of the NFLC, provided considerable assistance in the initial stage of the project. Mr. Edward McDermott, who joined the NFLC late in the project, devoted many hours to editing the manuscript. Ms. Isabelle Talpain-Long, project coordinator, served as the facilitator for the publication. She patiently corresponded with the authors throughout the complicated revision process. Her work at editing, formatting, and summarizing the data, and constructing the tables is especially appreciated. She played a vital role in preparing the manuscript for publication and actually getting the volume to press.

Introduction

Xueying Wang

As a language policy research institute, The National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) is devoted to improving the nation's capacity to communicate in languages other than English for both international and domestic purposes. From the perspective of the NFLC, the improvement of this national language capacity is a broad-based undertaking that includes, but goes far beyond, the teaching and learning of languages in the formal education system.

Drs. Richard Brecht and Ronald Walton (1993) have identified five "national language capacity" sectors currently active in the United States; the formal education system (kindergarten through college) is only one of them. The other sectors are: 1) the government sector, which provides training programs in a myriad of languages; 2) private providers, who offer language instruction through proprietary language schools and translation/interpretation services; 3) the overseas or home-country sector for a particular language, which not only provides instructional resources and teachers but serves as a host for language study abroad; and 4) the heritage language sector, which attempts to preserve non-English languages, a critical concern in various ethnic and linguistic communities throughout the United States.

Of all the language capacity sectors, the heritage language sector has perhaps the greatest potential for producing students with high language and cultural competence, and thus, the preservation and enhancement of language competencies have become a critical priority. The heritage communities, representing several hundred languages critical to the national language needs, constitute a valuable national resource for language competence in languages other than English.

The issues of heritage language preservation in the United States have periodically been the focus of research and language policy formulation. However, there have been no coherent, systematic policy initiatives aimed specifically at heritage language preservation issues even though these complex issues would no doubt be well served by such policies. Moreover, the family and home are not the only loci of language preservation. The broader heritage language community, including friends and relatives, neighborhoods and localities, and even home countries are joining together to teach and preserve their languages outside the formal education system. In this language preservation matrix are the "heritage community language schools."

As a way of preserving their languages, a number of heritage communities have established special schools that offer language instruction outside of the formal education system. These schools meet on either weekends or weekdays after school and are supported primarily by student tuition. The school administrators (school board members, principals, etc.) are unpaid volunteers elected from and by the parents; teachers, who receive a modest stipend, are often parents as well. Although the large number of heritage community language schools in the United States is growing, little attention has been paid to the organization and operation of this "parallel" language education system. Even less attention has been given to the contributions these schools make to the nation's language capacity.

The following collection of articles on heritage community language schools is predicated on the assumption that disseminating information about these schools would be of value to language policy makers at all levels of government, including federal, state, and local, as well as to educators in the schools, colleges, and universities of this country. A clear understanding of the mission, operations, and needs of these schools, and of their role in strengthening the nation's language capacity, should provide a valuable context for decisions regarding language policy.

There is an urgent need for educators (language educators in particular) to know more about heritage community language schools, because heritage language students are increasingly asking the education system to recognize their language learning achievement by awarding credit and requesting that the education system offer their language in the schools as a continuation of their study in the heritage schools. On the other hand, for those heritage communities that have not yet or are just beginning to organize schools, there is no need to reinvent the wheel when the experience of others can be shared through increased collaboration and through the contributions of members such as those who have provided articles in this volume.

This publication addresses issues of common interest to heritage community language schools and attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the goals of heritage community language schools?
- How are the heritage community language schools structured and managed?
- Who are the administrators? How are they selected?
- Who are the teachers? What are their qualifications?
- What is the academic curriculum for the heritage community language schools?
- Who are the students? How are they placed in the classrooms?
- What activities are conducted in conjunction with the classroom teaching?
- What problems do the heritage community language schools face in teaching?
- What are the needs and concerns of the heritage community language schools?
- What are the future trends for the heritage community language schools?
- What are the benefits of linking the formal education system with the heritage community language schools? What are the strategies for implementing future collaboration between the two systems?

To address these issues in a more concrete manner, this volume has focused on the Chinese heritage language community as a case study for the following reasons:

1. The Chinese community has a large heritage presence in the United States. According to a 1995 survey conducted by the National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools (NCACLS), 82,675 students are enrolled in Chinese heritage community language schools (hereafter referred to as Chinese language schools) in the United States. This enrollment is more than ten times the number of English-speaking students enrolled in K–12 Chinese programs and is at least three times their total enrollment in college level Chinese programs.

2. Chinese language schools have a long tradition in the United States and are constantly being refined, particularly as a result of the recent influx of immigrants from the People's Republic of China. Thus, this particular language group provides an interesting perspective on the past, present, and possible future of heritage community language schools.

3. Chinese language programs in the formal education system are increasingly dominated by students of Chinese descent, the majority of whom have attended a heritage community language school.

4. As the United States enters the Pacific Century, it will be involved in an intense, long-term, and critical relationship with Greater China (the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), which encompasses twenty percent of the world's population. Thus, the Chinese heritage community in the United States may have a strong presence in both domestic and international relations in the future.

5. An additional reason for this focus on Chinese is that the NFLC has been working extensively on issues related to Chinese language learning and teaching. The NFLC has been involved in the development of national proficiency testing guidelines for Chinese, has worked on the establishment of curricular guidelines at the secondary level, is currently involved in a project sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a guide for creating new Chinese language programs, and is also involved in developing a Chinese Language Learning Framework in conjunction with the Chinese Language Teachers Association. The NFLC sponsored a conference that led to the formation of the NCACLS, an umbrella organization for the majority of the regional associations of Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States. The editor of this volume has been working closely with these national and regional associations as they progress and develop. Thus, because of the relationships that the NFLC has developed with the Chinese heritage community, the choice of Chinese language schools was an obvious one.

This collection of articles is not intended to be a scholarly work or a research study, although such studies are desperately needed. Instead, the volume was purposely designed as a descriptive study for several reasons. Foremost, this work is aimed at the widest possible audience, rather than solely at the research and scholarly community. The intent is to provide a nontechnical, easily accessible depiction of what the nonprofit heritage community language schools attempt to accomplish and how they operate. The most effective way to do this is to hear directly from those who actually teach in or run these schools. For these reasons, experts in this sector were invited to present relevant topics relating to the everyday workings of the Chinese heritage community language school system. The articles included here express their views on the topics they consider most important. This work can also be seen as a source of issues and concerns that may suggest future research topics. One hopes that researchers and scholars will also find this volume useful in determining and prioritizing future study.

Twelve articles on Chinese language schools were compiled for this collection:

Overview. The establishment of Chinese language schools can be traced to the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States in the nineteenth century. With aspirations for their children to maintain their heritage language and culture, these Chinese-Americans organized nonprofit language schools. To date, there are 634 schools and 82,675 students enrolled nationwide. Parents volunteer as either administrators or teachers in these schools. The vast majority of students are of Chinese descent. As they attempt to continue their Chinese language education within the formal education system (typically at the high-school or college level), there is an acute need to bridge the gap between the two education systems.

Administration and Management. As Chinese language schools have grown both in number and in size, their infrastructure has become simultaneously more complex. In some school management systems where there is no board of directors, the principal, who has the most power in school administration, is advised and assisted by the advisory committee and the parent association. Some school structures closely resemble that of the public school system with a hierarchical administration working in collaboration with a board of directors. The board, typically consisting exclusively of parent volunteers, is responsible for defining the school's mission, making budget decisions and appointing a principal who manages the daily operations of the school. The strengths and weaknesses of different structures are discussed in detail by the authors.

Academic Curriculum. Chinese language schools offer either weekend or after-school classes, some of which are accredited by the public school system. A twelve-book series of instructional materials, *Hua-Yu*, is currently being used by eighty percent of these schools primarily because it is available without cost. However, the content of these books has not been adapted to take into account cultural relevance and the cognitive abilities of Chinese-American students. Teaching methodologies are problematic in some areas, and standardized testing instruments are critically needed. Issues concerning articulation between the formal education system and the heritage community language school system are discussed in this paper. The author makes recommendations for improving the academic curriculum at the Chinese language schools.

Non-Chinese Heritage Learners: Practices and implications. Because of an influx of non-Chinese heritage students, Chinese language schools now face the additional challenge of addressing the needs of students who do not have the option of seeking help in learning Chinese from their family or from the local schools in the formal education sector. However, these students, who enroll because of personal interest, are highly motivated to learn the language. The problems Chinese language schools experience in this regard include: shortage of financial and human resources to address the needs of such students, placement in classes with Chinese heritage learners, and lack of materials specifically designed for non-Chinese heritage learners. Another problem is the absence of the linguistic and pedagogical training necessary to teach Chinese as a *foreign* language. The continued increase in the number of non-Chinese heritage learners in Chinese language schools promises a more prominent role for them in the broader foreign language education system, but the schools' resources need to be redirected to meet the needs of this new student clientele.

Extracurricular Activities. Integral to Chinese language schools is instruction designed to foster ethical and personal growth in addition to academic development. In this article, the authors summarize the activities that Chinese language schools organize for their teachers, students, and communities. Teachers attend regional conferences and workshops annually for their professional development, and the students regularly participate in informal educational contests in Chinese vocabulary, speech, and writing. In addition, local school associations also organize sports competitions to promote friendship among schools. The celebration of various Chinese festivals and holidays, which vary in their frequency and form, is an important part of the school year. Chinese language schools also provide translation and interpretation services for their local communities.

Chinese Language Summer Camps for Students. Summer camps are organized by the local Chinese language schools for eight- to eighteen-year-old Chinese youths. These camps are intensive and typically last four to six days. Camp organizers, assisted by local high school Chinese students who are fluent in both Chinese and English, are usually parents from the schools in surrounding areas. To make the camp program attractive, experts from Greater China are invited to teach special courses in cultural enrichment. The days in language camps are long and full, mixing a wide variety of academic and cultural activities.

Short-term Professional Development for Teachers. Most teachers in Chinese language schools are parent volunteers. To improve the quality of language instruction, regional school associations organize annual conferences and workshops to train these teachers. A two-week training program in Taiwan offers classes every summer covering Chinese language, culture, and the performing arts. However, because of limited funding, very few teachers are able to attend. Summer teacher training conferences, sponsored by local Chinese cultural centers and regional Chinese school associations, are held at local Chinese language schools annually. During these events, the teachers participate in seminars and workshops where they are taught new instructional methods and share their experiences. Both administrators and teachers strongly support teacher training conferences.

Obtaining Credit from Local School Districts. Chinese students want their efforts and accomplishments in Chinese language schools to be recognized by the formal education system. Chinese language schools in southern California were the first to petition their districts to grant their students credit for high-school level language classes, and many have been successful in reaching this goal. In northern California, heritage students can receive five hours of credit for sixty hours of classroom instruction and an additional five credits if they pass a Chinese performance examination administered by the San Francisco Unified School District. Although New York State has not accredited any of its seventy Chinese language schools, a passing grade on the state's Chinese Regents' Examination can be an asset when applying for college. Because many schools across the country are in the process of obtaining credit for their students, the procedures for petitioning school districts for credit are described in detail in this article.

Awarding Credit through Testing—The Case of the San Francisco Unified School District. Approximately twenty to thirty school districts in San Francisco currently grant foreign language credit to students who attend Chinese language schools. The San Francisco Unified School District developed a district-wide language performance test based on the high school curriculum for first and second year Chinese. This ninety minute test assesses three language skills: listening, reading, and writing. Students who pass the district-wide performance test earn five or six credits for the year, the same as students who take a foreign language in high school. Students can register for one level of the test per year. Since the introduction of a credit award system, the dropout rate of middle/high-school-age students in Chinese language schools has decreased dramatically.

Improving Chinese Language Schools: Issues and Recommendations. Chinese language schools teach Chinese to their students, and are an authentic cultural resource within the United States. However, heritage students continue to struggle with high expectations from parents, hours of memorization and practice necessary to learn Chinese, heavy school workload, and weekends spent in classrooms. As a result, they show less and less interest in learning the language over time, especially when they reach middle or high school age. To motivate these students to learn the language, the author suggests accrediting the heritage community language schools, admitting non-Chinese heritage students, and providing additional training for their teachers. Collaboration between the formal education system and heritage community language schools would develop a synergy between the two systems and thus enhance language learning for heritage students as well as native English speakers.

Optimizing Unique Opportunities for Learning. After addressing the difficulties of learning and maintaining Chinese language skills, the author suggests ways of utilizing available opportunities and learning tools to optimize Chinese language instruction. The author argues that student participation in a natural social setting provides the most stimulating and effective learning environment. By encouraging parents to speak Chinese at home, the student's language learning would revolve around everyday experiences and would constantly be reinforced. Reading Chinese newspapers and books and watching movies generally help improve reading and listening skills in media that are more natural than textbooks or practice drills. Providing glossaries of difficult words also would help students to do their homework independently with less reliance on others. These strategies collectively would make acquiring the Chinese language a more effective experience for the students.

Forging a Link: Chinese Heritage Community Language Schools and the Formal Education System. It is unrealistic to expect the formal education system to teach all the languages other than English that are critically important to this country. It is quite plausible, however, to seek alternative, innovative mechanisms to better link the formal education system with the heritage community language school system so as to provide efficient and effective language instruction. This article outlines the differences and similarities between two systems, with the primary focus on Chinese language schools. The challenges of forging a link between the two systems are discussed in detail. However, there is no doubt that both systems would benefit from more collaboration and greater coordination.

In conclusion, there is clearly a need to improve America's capacity in languages other than English. At least five capacity sectors contribute to this effort; of these sectors, the heritage sector appears to be the most neglected with regard to building our national language capacity. Within this sector, heritage community language schools play a critical role, but little has been written about their mission, structure, and contributions. This publication strives to furnish information on heritage language education that will be of value not only to those involved in language policy decisions and language education, but to the general public as well.

Reference

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Overview

Theresa Hsu Chao

Chinese heritage community language schools (hereafter referred to as Chinese language schools) are integral parts of the Chinese community in most medium-sized and large cities across the United States. According to a recent study by the National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools, approximately 82,675 students are taking Chinese in 634 language schools across the country. (See Table 1 at the end of this article for a geographical distribution of Chinese language schools.)

The Early Days of Chinese Language Schools

Chinese language schools in the United States date back as early as 1848, to the time of the immigration of Chinese laborers. To serve the needs of those early immigrants, classes in Cantonese were held for the residents of Chinatown in a number of large cities in the United States. In 1905, the emperor of the Ch'ing Dynasty dispatched his Secretary of Justice to the United States to identify and assess the needs of Chinese communities. In his report, the Secretary of Justice recommended that government funding be used to establish formal Chinese language schools in Chinese communities. The emperor responded by dispatching an envoy to San Francisco to further consult with the Chinese Consulate and leaders of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. As a result, the Ta Ch'ing Sh-Yan (currently the Chung Wah School), Lincoln School, and a few other Chinese Language Schools in San Francisco were founded.

Subsequently, Chinese language schools were established in New York and Chicago under the leadership of the envoy and leaders of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The founding of China as a republic in 1911 provided additional incentives for the establishment of overseas Chinese language schools in major cities across the United States. In the 1930s, Los Angeles, San Diego, Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Minneapolis, and Oakland were among the cities that had one or more Chinese language schools.

Family-Oriented Chinese Language Schools

Events such as the political turmoil in Asia after World War II and the relaxation of United States immigration regulations in 1965 prompted a new influx of immigration that included well-educated immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong. These immigrants and their families became permanent residents or naturalized citizens of the United States. Motivated by a strong desire to preserve their Chinese heritage and promote the ethnic identity of second-generation Chinese-Americans, these Chinese immigrants volunteered to teach their youngsters in language schools.

Family-oriented schools were developed to incorporate innovative ideas and practical needs. Recent immigrants from Mainland China and Southeast Asia in the last decade have brought new resources to the Chinese language school system.

The Status of Chinese Language Schools

Currently, there are both for-profit and nonprofit Chinese language schools in the United States. The for-profit schools are mostly kindergartens, child-care centers, and tutorial programs for secondary school children. The nonprofit Chinese language schools consist of those operated entirely by volunteers, and those run by voluntary administrators and board members with the assistance of a small, partially compensated teaching staff. To comply with the U.S. tax code, nonprofit Chinese language schools are usually affiliated with nonprofit organizations such as Chinese-American associations or religious organizations.

Administrative Structure of Nonprofit Chinese Language Schools

Nonprofit Chinese language schools are operated by the parents of students enrolled in these schools and are open only on weekends or after regular school hours. When children enroll in this type of school, the parents automatically become members of the school's administrative body that formulates and adopts bylaws and elects members of the board of directors, the principal, and administrative officials. In some schools, the board of directors is responsible for electing the principal and administrative officials. In medium-size schools, the board of directors consists of a minimum of three members, but in larger schools it may have as many as thirty members. This board of directors meets regularly during the semester to set policies and directives regarding school administration, school activities, teaching materials, and teaching methods. The teaching faculty and administrative staff are hired by the board of directors or nominated by the principal with final approval required from the board of directors.

The principal is responsible for the overall operation of the school. Small schools usually have no board members, and the principals are often burdened with teaching and administrative duties. In a school with two to three hundred students, the administrative structure is often comparable to that of an accredited school. In schools with more than five hundred students, the principal is responsible for a large number of educational and administrative duties, comparable to those of a principal of a public high school.

Financial Resources

Generally, the funding of a Chinese language school comes from tuition and fundraising.

Tuition. Only a few schools connected with religious organizations are tuition-free. The majority of Chinese language schools are open two hours on weekends and charge $70 to $250 per student for each ten- to seventeen-week semester, whereas the more expensive ones charge up to $400 per student. After-school Chinese language programs are open three hours a day, Monday through Friday; their tuition is comparable to the rate charged by day-care centers.

Fundraising. School boards seek donations from local businesses, institutions, and individuals. Schools also raise funds by sponsoring dinners, dance parties, picnics, and exhibits, and by selling gift certificates.

Human Resources

Chinese language schools are primarily operated by volunteers consisting of the parents of students enrolled in the schools and students from local high schools, colleges, and universities.

Volunteer Service by Parents. The operation of Chinese language schools relies mainly on parent volunteers. Traditionally, parents donate time and pool their skills to run the schools without any financial compensation. This system is still followed by many Chinese language schools.

Parent Service Plan. In larger Chinese language schools, parent volunteers are unable to assume all the responsibilities of running the schools. As a result, mandatory "Parent Service Plan" programs are established to encourage parents to share school responsibilities. Under this plan, the workload is divided more evenly among all parents of the students. Before the semester begins, the school board calculates the total hours needed to operate the school and divides the workload by the number of parents with children enrolled in the school. Each parent is required to work a certain number of hours during the semester. To ensure that the system is fair, parents are asked to make a cash deposit at the beginning of the semester to guarantee their volunteer services. The number of volunteer service hours provided by each parent is recorded during the semester. Those who fail to work their required hours do not get their refund at the end of the semester. This system has many merits and has been widely adopted by Chinese language schools in southern California. Schools with three hundred students require the parents provide a combined total of anywhere from four thousand to eight thousand hours of volunteer services over a thirty-five-week school year. In these cases, thirty to forty parents on-site and off-site would be needed each week to provide volunteer services. This system has been credited with enhancing parental understanding of school activities, promoting team spirit among parents in program coordination, effectively tapping parents' professional expertise to enrich school curricula, and alleviating an increasingly heavy burden on the administrative and teaching staff.

Other Volunteers. Some schools recruit high school and university students to do volunteer work at Chinese language schools. In recognition of their effort on behalf of the schools, these students are awarded community service certificates.

Student Placement

The difference in students' age, family background, and level of competence in Mandarin Chinese are the factors that make student placement a difficult task for educators in Chinese language schools. To address effectively the needs of all students, the classes held in Chinese language schools are organized in the following categories:

Mandarin Chinese Only Classes. In schools with a small number of students, students with varying levels of Mandarin Chinese and of different ages are grouped in one class because of the limited number of teachers. In schools with 150 or more students, students are grouped according to compatible levels of Mandarin Chinese. Ideally, students who are in the same age group with similar levels of Chinese should be placed in the same class. In schools with 300 or more students, students of similar age with compatible levels of Chinese are usually grouped together. The age differences are one or two years in beginning classes and two to four years in mid-level and advanced Chinese classes.

Mandarin Chinese as Second Language Classes. Modeled after English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, these classes are designed for students who speak only English or other Chinese dialects. These classes emphasize listening and speaking skills with the goal of placing the students in regular Mandarin Chinese classes within a year or two.

Chinese Language High School Credit Classes. These classes are designed for students in the ninth to twelfth grade. These classes cover listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Those who complete these classes successfully are granted credits accepted by certain regular high schools.

Programs Offered in Chinese Language Schools

Three types of programs are generally offered in Chinese language schools: weekend, after-school, and summer.

Weekend Programs. Classes are held three hours a week on Friday evening, or during the day on Saturday or Sunday. In general, two hours are devoted to language learning and one hour is reserved for cultural activities or field trips. However, some schools devote the entire three hours to language learning.

After-school Programs. Classes are held in public high schools from around 3–6 P.M. Monday through Friday. Classes include one hour of Mandarin Chinese, one hour of Chinese culture, and one hour of tutorial lessons in English, mathematics, or other homework. In recent years, after-school programs have become very popular with parents and students.

Summer Programs. Classes are held for three hours or more each day, Monday through Friday, during the summer months. On average, fifteen percent of Chinese language schools nationwide offer this type of program for six to eight weeks. In southern California, twenty-eight percent of Chinese language schools offer summer programs. The classes are very effective because they provide students with intensive training.

Curriculum and Chinese Language Tests

Mandarin language and Chinese culture dominate the curriculum of these programs. In language classes, ninety-five percent of Chinese language schools use Chinese textbooks and supplementary materials. The primary and secondary school textbooks used most frequently are published in Taiwan or in the People's Republic of China. Generally, one volume is taught in weekend programs and two volumes in after-school programs during a school year. Teachers often prepare supplementary materials for their students. The cultural classes are electives and include topics such as calligraphy, history, folk dance, chess, origami, martial arts, brush painting, public speech, drama, and ball games. Some Chinese language schools also offer mathematics and computer courses in Chinese.

A number of Chinese language tests, such as the ones designed by the Center for Applied Linguistics, have been used to assess the students' language abilities. Because students in Chinese language schools are mostly Chinese heritage students who already have at least some understanding of Chinese and possess rudimentary language skills, the classes have traditionally emphasized only reading and writing skills. To address this issue, Chinese language schools in the United States are now developing textbooks to focus on practical training of listening and speaking skills in conjunction with the traditional emphasis on reading and writing.

The Link Between Chinese Language Schools and the U.S. Education System

Since the early 1900s, Chinese language schools have operated successfully outside the United States education system. In the U.S. education system, Chinese programs are designed mainly for students not of Chinese descent, and the classes tend to focus on practical usage of Mandarin Chinese. Chinese language programs offered by Chinese language schools, on the other hand, are tailored for students of Chinese descent, and classes are generally conducted in Mandarin Chinese.

Recent developments have contributed to the recognition that a viable link should be established between these two types of language programs:

- an increasing number of students of non-Chinese heritage have enrolled in Chinese language schools;
- an increasing number of students of Chinese descent who attended Chinese language schools are now taking Chinese in colleges and universities;
- through annual and semiannual workshops, Chinese language school teachers benefit from the expertise of the formal education system; as a result, student performance at Chinese language schools has improved;
- a number of school districts have granted credit for students who study at Chinese language schools;
- standardized test scores of Chinese language school students are now accepted by some formal educational institutions.

Obtaining Credit from the Formal Education System

Chinese language schools have succeeded in getting some public high schools to accept the grades and to grant credit to their students. These grades and credits earned are transferred directly from Chinese language schools to public high schools. In southern California, the practice of credit transfer from a Chinese language school to a public high school started as early as 1982. Of the 102 Chinese language schools in southern California, 92 are eligible to apply for credit transfer but only 28 have been granted credit transfer status. In northern California, 9 schools have been granted credit transfer status out of the 87 Chinese language schools in the region; 74 of them may apply for credit transfer.

Credit transfer may apply to electives and sometimes to required courses; it can reflect Pass/Fail or a specific letter grade. The number of credits granted for a specific course depends on the degree of difficulty of the course, the rank of the Chinese language school in its region, and the relationship between the Chinese language school and the local school district. In San Francisco, at the end of each school year, the City Bureau of Education offers a number of assessment tests for students of different language levels. A student enrolled in a Chinese language school will be eligible for five credits upon passing the test. In New Jersey, Chinese language schools are lobbying city governments to adopt similar measures.

SAT II: Chinese Language Test

In April 1994, the American College Board introduced the SAT II: Chinese, which measures the language abilities of all students, including students of non-Chinese descent who have taken two to four years of Chinese in an American high school. Any American student in the ninth to twelfth grade is eligible to take the test. According to 1994 and 1995 statistics provided by the Educational Testing Service, 3,500 to 4,000 students have taken each test. The total number of students taking the tests ranked third, behind those taking the Spanish and French tests with listening.

Eighty-six percent of the students who took the SAT II: Chinese in 1995 scored over seven hundred points. Ninety percent of the students who took the test attribute their high scores to the training they received at home, in Chinese language schools, or in their home country. The test results and student surveys indicate that Chinese language schools are a major source of Chinese language instruction for the K–12 levels. Chinese language schools help prepare students to take courses in advanced Chinese and Chinese literature at colleges and universities. Many high school students hope that Chinese soon will be included in the Advanced Placement Test.

Conclusion

Chinese language schools in the United States have evolved from private, one-room schools of the early part of the century outside the American education system to what we see today: dynamic, creative, and practical institutions of primary and secondary education serving both the Chinese communities and mainstream American society.

Educators, parents, and students who are involved with Chinese language schools in the United States have been gratified by the advancement of the schools in recent years, including the steady increase in student enrollment, the implementation of the SAT II: Chinese, and credit transfer. Many regard the conference "Teaching and Learning Asian Languages in California" organized by the University of California-Berkeley in April 1993 in San Francisco as a landmark. For the first time, a major academic conference invited representatives of Chinese language schools to participate in discussions on Chinese language teaching. Many educators in Chinese language schools are encouraged by the prospect of getting outside support to reexamine such critical issues as curriculum design, teacher training, materials development, and student assessment.

In the future, Chinese language schools should continue to seek national recognition and strive to be a vital link for students of Chinese between their education in primary and secondary schools and at the post-secondary level. Chinese language schools also should look into developing applicable placement tests to suit their unique needs. More important, Chinese language schools must seek a more active role in mainstream American education. Chinese language schools hope to make greater contributions to Chinese language education in the United States by playing an increasing role at the national level.

Translated by Wendy Lyle

Table 1: Distribution of Chinese Heritage Community Language Schools, Students, and Teachers in the United States per State (1994–1995)

State	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Students/ Teachers
Alaska	2	69	9	7.67
Alabama	5	183	26	7.04
Arizona	5	750	84	8.93
Arkansas	1	20	3	6.67
California	223	36,794	1,928	19.08
Colorado	2	140	17	8.24
Connecticut	5	413	57	7.25
Delaware	1	180	12	15.00
District of Columbia	1	25	2	12.50
Florida	14	871	93	9.37
Georgia	7	1,048	52	20.15
Hawaii	8	900	51	17.65
Idaho	1	9	1	9.00
Iowa	4	130	17	7.65
Illinois	33	2,761	278	9.93
Indiana	8	241	31	7.77
Kansas	1	150	10	15.00
Kentucky	2	78	7	11.14
Louisiana	2	215	22	9.77
Maine	1	27	4	6.75
Maryland	19	2,978	204	14.60
Massachusetts	13	2,394	196	12.21
Michigan	15	1,057	127	8.32
Minnesota	3	280	28	10.00
Mississippi	2	50	6	8.33
Missouri	2	165	16	10.31
Montana	0	0	0	0.00
Nebraska	2	62	10	6.20
Nevada	2	73	7	10.43
New Hampshire	1	75	4	18.75
New Jersey	28	5,326	426	12.50
New Mexico	1	18	5	3.60
New York	71	11,786	721	16.35
North Carolina	5	295	38	7.76
North Dakota	1	8	2	4.00
Ohio	14	1,132	98	11.55
Oklahoma	5	166	24	6.92
Oregon	5	510	41	12.44
Pennsylvania	15	1,576	124	12.71
Rhode Island	3	78	8	9.75
South Carolina	3	86	8	10.75
South Dakota	0	0	0	0.00
Tennessee	5	212	32	6.63
Texas	44	5,256	430	12.22
Utah	4	244	21	11.62
Vermont	1	21	1	21.00
Virginia	16	1,334	122	10.93
Washington	19	2,208	98	22.53
West Virginia	2	30	6	5.00
Wisconsin	7	251	29	8.66
Wyoming	0	0	0	0.00
TOTAL	**634**	**82,675**	**5,536**	**14.93**

Source: National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools

Administration and Management

Theresa Hsu Chao, Lydia Chen, and Edward Chang

Chinese language schools were established in the United States almost a century ago. Chinese immigrants created these schools to ensure that their children would maintain their language and culture. Initially, these schools were small; however, attendance soon increased with the growing popularity of the schools. One example of the dramatic growth in enrollment is the Berryessa Chinese School located in San Francisco. Established in the 1970s, it opened with fewer than 100 students and has grown into one of the largest schools in the country, with seventy classes and 1,300 students. It is now common for Chinese language schools to have more than fifty classes and as many as 3,000 students.

Along with the expansion of Chinese language schools came the need to create a system of administration and management. When these schools were established, the teaching and administrative duties were shared among the parents, without regard to their professional backgrounds. This system was sufficient for the small schools with a limited curriculum (almost exclusively language instruction). However, as school enrollments grew, a broad range of language and cultural courses were developed and an increasing number of instructors with teaching credentials and a background in education or linguistics were hired, which resulted in a more complex administrative structure.

Schools Without a Board of Directors

Many schools with fewer than one hundred students do not have a board of directors and operate under an administrative system consisting of the principal, an Advisory Committee, and the parents (Figure 1).

This system of management is different from that used in schools with a board of directors in that the principal shoulders most of the power and responsibilities for the school's operation. The principal's primary responsibilities include hiring teachers, developing budgets and managing financial affairs, negotiating agreements with local boards of education for the use of school property, organizing student registration, and representing the school as a spokesperson at national and regional Chinese language school associations. In addition, the principal appoints the heads for the different functional areas of the school.

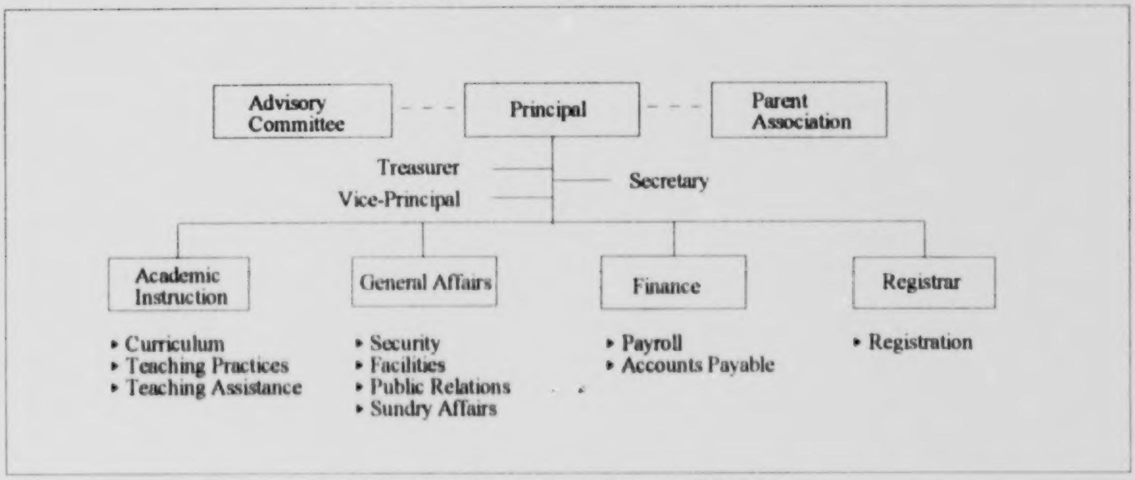
Advisory Committee
Principal
Parent Association
Treasurer
Vice-Principal
Secretary
Academic Instruction
General Affairs
Finance
Registrar
▸ Curriculum
▸ Teaching Practices
▸ Teaching Assistance
▸ Security
▸ Facilities
▸ Public Relations
▸ Sundry Affairs
▸ Payroll
▸ Accounts Payable
▸ Registration

Figure 1. School without Board of Directors

Different schools may have variations in the number and type of functional areas for their administration; however, the following is a list of the most common functional areas.

I. Academic/Instructional Affairs
- set curriculum
- assist in hiring teachers
- evaluate the performance of teachers
- provide guidance for instruction and teaching

II. Operations/General Affairs
- manage the school's possessions, i.e., VCRs, library books, computer equipment, etc.
- ensure the safety and security of the campus
- handle public relations
- manage all sundry affairs of the school

III. Finance
- manage school funds, including payrolls and accounts
- prepare the budget

IV. Registration
- maintain student database
- perform registration

Sharing some of the principal's responsibilities is the Advisory Committee, which is a rather informal entity, with no set number of members. Members of the Advisory Committee are appointed by the principal and may include former principals and experienced school members. The Committee's main role is to aid the principal in the logistics, planning, and implementation of the school's operational responsibilities. The principal may consult the Committee regarding any of the school's functions or events.

The third group involved in this administrative system is the parents of the students, although their role is more diversified. The parents' main responsibility is to elect the school officers: principal, vice-principal, secretary, and treasurer. These positions are typically filled by the parents. Once the officers have been elected, the parents generally have little power in the operation of the school. However, the parents do conduct biannual meetings, where the principal and other officers report on the status of the school. In addition, parents help in a variety of ways, from assisting in the daily operation of the school to staffing special events. They also serve an important role as advocates for the students.

Although there are a number of advantages and disadvantages to this management system, the main asset of this school structure without a board of directors is that because most of the power is wielded by the principal, decisions are made quickly, and the smaller bureaucracy makes the school generally very efficient. In addition, should there be any problems or complaints, there is only one person to approach, rather than many, which can often expedite solving the problem. However, this system's asset can also be a disadvantage: because the principal wields most of the power, unwittingly selecting an officer who is either not qualified or not committed to running the school would pose a serious problem. Although principals will often welcome feedback from teachers and parents, they are under no obligation to do so. Finally, because the principal and the other school officials usually serve only one-year terms, the annual change in leadership leads to some discontinuity in the development of the school's long-term goals. The Advisory Committee, with its experienced members from previous administrations, can help to alleviate this problem, but a permanent and flexible solution needs to be found.

Schools with a Board of Directors: Type I

One of the major disadvantages of schools without a board of directors is that there is little accountability if responsibilities are not carried out. To alleviate this problem, many schools have added Boards of Directors, whose responsibilities include supervising the principal. As many of the schools grew, the parents began electing five to seven people, usually from their membership, to serve on the board. Today, most Chinese language schools with enrollments over one hundred students have administrations operated by a Board of Directors, a principal, and a Parents' Association.

Most of the larger Chinese language schools were founded by, and are affiliated with, community organizations such as the local Chinese American Association, church, or temple (Figure 2). The schools are able to utilize the resources from these community organizations, and in turn, these organizations provide administrative guidance. Typically, the schools have members of the community organizations serve on their Board of Directors. The community organization elects eleven to twenty-one of its board members to serve on the Chinese language school's Board of Directors. The board members, in turn, elect a chairperson to coordinate all the board activities. In addition to regular meetings on the school's policies and direction, the school board is convened whenever a major problem related to Chinese language school issues occurs. The responsibilities of the board include setting the long-term goals to provide direction for the school, electing a principal, evaluating the performance of the principal and his/her officers, and approving the budget.

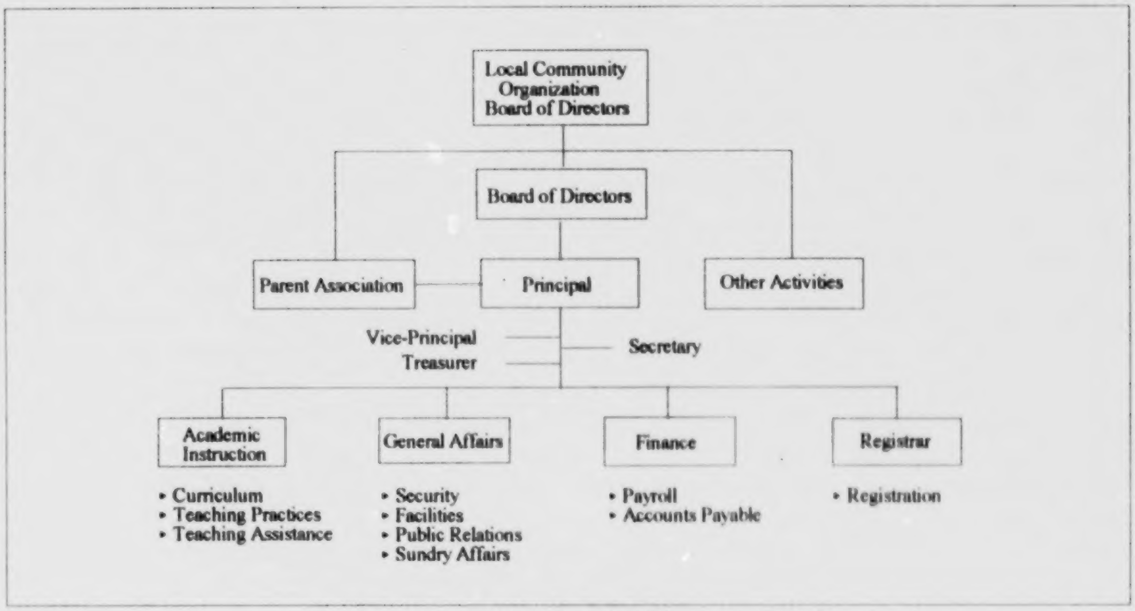
Local Community Organization Board of Directors
Board of Directors
Parent Association
Principal
Other Activities
Vice-Principal
Treasurer
Secretary
Academic Instruction
General Affairs
Finance
Registrar
• Curriculum
• Teaching Practices
• Teaching Assistance
• Security
• Facilities
• Public Relations
• Sundry Affairs
• Payroll
• Accounts Payable
• Registration

Figure 2. School with a Board of Directors: Type I

This administrative system is different from the one described previously because the principal no longer holds the majority of power. Although the responsibilities of the principal remain mostly the same as stated earlier, the Board of Directors often aids and cooperates with the principal to fulfill responsibilities ranging from curriculum design to special events planning. In addition, the principal is held accountable for his/her performance by the Board of Directors and must report at their regular meetings on the status of the school. Another point of difference between this type of administrative structure and the previous one is that the principal usually serves a two-year term rather than a one-year term. This helps maintain a sense of continuity in the school leadership. Yet another main difference with the previous administrative structure is that the principal, instead of the parents or Parents' Association, appoints the officers with whom he/she will be working: the vice-principal, secretary, and treasurer. These appointments, as with most of the principal's decisions, are subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

Another characteristic inherent in this type of structure is that the Board of Directors is also the source of a variety of other activities in which these schools can get involved. As mentioned earlier, these schools are often part of a parent organization, and the Chinese American Association, churches, and temples often provide students with cultural and community activities. For example, the students may participate in cultural exchanges with local schools, volunteer at convalescent homes, or participate in a variety of other activities.

Finally, a major part of this administrative system is the Parents' Association. The parents of currently enrolled students can automatically join the community organization, which also includes parents of former students and former school administrators. Social events are common and are a source of networking for the parents, and they often become consolidated and active members within the community. This gives them considerable influence when electing new members to the Board of Directors. In addition, the parents' social connection to the community organization often encourages them to volunteer and become more fully involved in school activities.

This system of management presents several advantages. As mentioned previously, there is a high level of parental involvement in the operation of the school. In addition, because the appointed principal usually serves two or more years, there is less discontinuity in the school leadership over time. There is also a considerable amount of power allocated to members of the administration other than the principal. The principal's budget proposals, personnel appointments, and most of his/her actions are subject to the approval of the board. However, as with any large organization, an increased amount of bureaucracy can lead to a loss in efficiency. Nevertheless, this type of school administration has become popular in recent years because of its many attributes.

Schools with a Board of Directors: Type II

When some of the smaller Chinese language schools were first established, the number of classes and students enrolled were so few that the administration consisted solely of a parent representative from each class. This group of parents elected a principal to oversee and manage the school events. The parents assumed the responsibilities of managing the finances and hiring teachers for their respective class. As enrollments increased and new classes were added, the system was maintained, but on a larger scale. Parents in each class now elect both a representative and an assistant representative. The representatives of each class make up the membership of the school's Board of Directors. The Board Members then appoint a principal as well as a vice-principal, a secretary, and a treasurer. The principal undertakes responsibilities similar to those described earlier.

The main attribute of this type of administrative system is that each class and grade level has equal representation in the Board of Directors. This ensures that activities organized by the Chinese language school include students at all class levels. In addition, there is direct contact between parents, teachers, and the school's officers, allowing for an easy exchange of ideas, feedback, and opinions. However, the lack of continuity in leadership may be a problem here: as with the other systems, parents volunteer for these positions and, as a result, most serve for only one year. This system attempts to maintain a certain level of experience in the administration by having the assistant representatives of one year become the representatives the next. In addition, the vice-principal becomes the principal the following year. This way, this administrative system has been able to compensate partially for the usual lack of continuity in leadership.

Conclusion

As Chinese language schools have seen their enrollments and the number of classes offered increase in recent years, many adjustments in the administration and management have had to be made. In examining the three basic types of administrative structure, it becomes evident that the main issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of continuity in the administrative positions at the schools. These positions, including the principal, vice-principal, secretary, and treasurer, are either voluntary or offer only a nominal salary. Consequently, although most officers donate a tremendous amount of time and effort for one year, they usually do not have time for a second or third term. To maintain more consistent and experienced leadership in the school, a proposal was made to turn some of these administrative positions into professional, salaried jobs. One area where consistency is especially important is in the curriculum. A salaried position might ensure its continuity. Offering certain professionally paid positions should allow schools to maintain an experienced administration and a consistent curriculum over a number of years.

With the increase in number and in size of Chinese language schools, their administrative structure has required some adjustments. Significant amounts of time and effort have been devoted toward achieving this end. Many improvements have already been made in the Chinese language school systems, though there are still challenges ahead. However, with continued community effort and support for the schools, these problems will be solved as well.

Academic Curriculum

Pay-Fen Serena Wang

Chinese language schools place a special emphasis on improving curriculum, instructional materials, and testing and assessment instruments. This article focuses on the academic curriculum of these schools with a special emphasis on the textbooks used, the testing/assessment methods applied, identifying problems, and making suggestions for their improvement. It also identifies issues that need to be addressed to improve the coordination between Chinese language schools and universities in the United States.

Curriculum and Materials

The curriculum in Chinese language schools typically follows the format of the adopted textbooks, with a variety of supplemental materials selected by the instructors. The choice of textbooks in Chinese language schools varies. Chinese language schools mostly use textbooks published in Greater China. For demonstration purposes, this article focuses on the *Hua-Yu* instruction materials published in Taiwan. According to the statistics of the NCACLS, about eighty percent of Chinese language schools use *Hua-Yu* (Revised Edition) as their basic textbook, five percent use *Guo-Yu*, and ten percent create their own textbook or use textbooks of their own choice.

The *Hua-Yu* textbook series, first published in 1990, consists of twelve books. The first three books are primarily picture books that stress identification of characters; books four through six emphasize the application of vocabulary to daily life; books seven through twelve aim at developing better reading comprehension and appropriate understanding of Chinese culture. The teaching goals of *Hua-Yu* are enumerated as follows:

I. Books One to Four (Elementary level)
  - become familiar with a phonetic spelling system and be able to use it
  - develop the ability to speak about daily events in Mandarin Chinese
  - explain or describe familiar subjects
  - demonstrate proper writing skills, for example, writing a note or short essay
  - use common idiomatic expressions in Chinese
  - gain knowledge of Chinese radicals, punctuation symbols, and how to use the Chinese dictionary
  - read and write approximately 400 characters
  - acquire basic knowledge of Chinese culture and history

II. Books Five to Eight (Intermediate level)
  - converse freely and create dialogues in Mandarin on unfamiliar topics or situations
  - demonstrate competence in language usage pertaining to daily events

- write letters and diaries
- learn about Chinese culture and festivals
- perform Chinese skits
- give short speeches
- read and write an additional 500 characters

III. Books Nine to Twelve (Advanced level)

- discuss and debate abstract topics
- demonstrate advanced writing skills, for example, writing commentary articles
- gain a deeper knowledge of Chinese culture and customs
- acquire additional knowledge of Chinese history, geography, and traditional values
- gain expanded knowledge of Chinese grammar and rhetoric
- develop reading and comprehension of Chinese literature
- read newspapers
- give formal speeches and report public opinion on current events
- read and write an additional 450 characters

A great variety of supplemental teaching materials are used with the elementary textbook. Teachers in Chinese language schools have collected a sizeable amount of materials on a wide variety of topics, including Chinese history, geography, ethics, calligraphy, and folk arts. Teachers also organize a number of extracurricular activities, such as folk dancing, traditional painting, Chinese cuisine, kung-fu, and puppet shows. These activities form an integral part of Chinese language teaching.

Difficulties and Recommendations for Textbook Use

Hua-Yu (Revised Edition) is an adequate textbook for Chinese language schools, and for years it has satisfied the need for a basic textbook series; at the same time, it leaves something to be desired. Following are some of the difficulties and problems encountered in its use as well as some recommendations for addressing these problems.

Adapting the Teaching Materials to the Age and Cultural Background of the Students

The theme or subject matter of some lessons is not well suited to the cultural background of heritage students in the United States. Many lessons in *Hua-Yu* reflect the cultural perspective of Taiwan, which is very different from the students' perspectives and daily experiences. As a result, students show little interest in these lessons. For example, one lesson in book six tells the story of Emperor Yu harnessing the flood. Some of the students do not understand why the Emperor refuses to enter his own home after an absence of thirteen long years. The students are unable to take the story seriously. Other lessons are not suited to the age or mental development of the students: a lesson such as "The Toy Shop," in book seven is simply too elementary for teenagers.

In classroom usage, teachers must draw the students' attention to the cultural background and content of the lessons that are not well suited to the students. The future edition of the textbook should contain more appropriate topics and should be better suited to the physical and mental development of students in Chinese language schools.

Learning Phonetic Symbols

Chinese phonetic symbols are overused. In *Hua-Yu*, all the texts are marked with Chinese phonetic symbols. As students progress through the series, they become so accustomed to this system that they have difficulties reading the text without it.

Students should be encouraged, from the very beginning, to form the habit of reading without the help of phonetic symbols. *Hua-Yu* should follow the example of *Guo-Yu* in its next edition, in noting only new words and phrases in phonetic symbols after book nine instead of in the whole text.

The system of the Chinese phonetic alphabets should be included in the appendix of phonetics notation at the end of *Hua-Yu*. Chinese phonetic alphabets are now widely used in American high schools and universities. To ignore this fact will surely place students from Chinese language schools in very embarrassing situations later on.

Using Supplemental Teaching Materials

It is generally acknowledged that no single textbook can satisfy the needs of students who come from various regions and different backgrounds, just as no single textbook can meet the diverse requirements of language teaching. Chinese language schools should be encouraged to gather and edit supplemental teaching materials to meet their own needs, and teachers should receive special training to use the textbook in a flexible way.

Teaching All Four Language Skills

In classroom practice, reading and writing are emphasized, while listening and speaking are comparatively neglected. The teaching methods used in Chinese language schools are imported from Greater China, where Chinese is the native tongue and the language of daily communication. In the American setting, the language environment is different, and students have fewer opportunities to listen to and speak Chinese. Another difficulty is that some students' mother tongue is different from Mandarin. Even students in their junior or senior years find speaking and understanding spoken Chinese difficult because of inadequate practice.

Consequently, listening and speaking activities should be increased. For students whose mother tongue is not Mandarin, bilingual classes focusing on listening and speaking should be provided. For students of high school age, even those whose mother tongue is Chinese, listening and speaking should also be stressed. Work assignments should not be limited to reading and writing but should include aural and oral practice as well. Parents should be encouraged to use Chinese in interacting with their children.

Testing Instruments

Achievement tests are the most common method used to evaluate students. Chinese language schools often adopt the grading system used by public schools, either letter grades (A, B, C, etc.) or the Pass/Fail option. Each teacher designs his/her tests to evaluate students, resulting in the absence of unified assessment standards in Chinese language schools. In general, most schools give midterm and final exams to evaluate the speaking, reading, writing, and listening comprehension skills of their students. Other important factors used to evaluate students include attendance, class participation, and homework. In some cases, Chinese language students may receive credit or take proficiency tests outside the school to evaluate their language skills.

Improving Coordination between Chinese Language Schools and the Formal Education System

Another concern is how to coordinate language instruction in Chinese language schools with language instruction in high schools and universities. Several problems merit discussion:

1. The differences between the traditional and the simplified forms of Chinese characters are significant. Many high schools and universities teach the simplified writing form of Chinese, whereas Chinese language schools with teachers from Taiwan still use the traditional writing form. This difference creates problems for the students from Chinese language schools. One solution is to teach eleventh- and twelfth-grade students in Chinese language schools the simplified writing form.

2. A similar problem exists with regard to phonetic notation. There are two different systems in common use: phonetic symbols and the phonetic alphabet. The majority of language programs in the formal education system teach the phonetic alphabet, whereas Chinese language schools use phonetic symbols. As with the writing systems, Chinese language schools should introduce the phonetic alphabet to upper level students.

3. In Chinese language schools, grammar is not emphasized because it is rarely a problem for native Chinese speakers. However, not all students are native speakers, and thus grammar cannot be ignored. Even among the native Chinese speakers, there are students whose grammar skills are deteriorating. For these students grammar is a necessity. In addition, grammar is strongly emphasized in university language teaching programs. To prepare students for university courses, Chinese language schools should include more grammar in their lessons.

4. In Chinese language schools, teaching focuses on cultural and language acquisition, whereas in universities teaching often focuses on language application. This difference may also produce new problems.

Trends and Conclusion

In 1993, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (an organization affiliated with the government of Taiwan) published a new set of teaching materials for overseas teaching programs called the "Children's Chinese Reader." The contents emphasize relevant daily communication. The primary teaching materials are based on the students' daily experiences and use educational games and a broad range of teaching activities. These new materials should gradually become widely used to the extent that they are appropriate for children's language levels and psychological development.

In view of the rapid development of Chinese language schools, the NCACLS made an effort at its 1995 annual meeting in Anaheim to complete a comprehensive review of the existing standards, curriculum, and assessment of the Chinese language schools. The purpose was to develop uniform teaching standards, a satisfying basic textbook, and over time, a practical system of evaluation.

In addition to textbooks, cassette tapes and television currently play supporting roles in teaching. The multimedia approach has become widely accepted and is a guiding principle in language teaching. New developments in the fast-growing area of computer technology, including CD-ROM, Hyper Card, and even the Internet, may become the teaching tools of tomorrow's Chinese language classroom.

It is hoped that Chinese language schools will develop their own standardized assessment methods that can be adopted by a majority of these schools in the United States. To reach this goal, the NCACLS has gathered an extensive number of materials and has invited experts and scholars to research and develop new materials. The SAT II: Chinese is becoming a very important tool for assessing the abilities of students learning Chinese. In the future, it may begin to guide teaching methods and content in Chinese language schools.

The need to coordinate the teaching materials, content, and standards of Chinese language schools with Chinese language courses in American high schools and colleges remains a significant issue. In addition, Chinese language schools need to foster cooperation with mainstream American teaching institutions so that the achievements of their students can be recognized and rewarded as a valuable educational experience.

Non-Chinese Heritage Learners: Practices and Implications

Ming Lee

As a result of the rapid growth of Chinese language schools over the last thirty years, the student population is now tremendously large and shows very distinct differences in students' language and cultural backgrounds. This paper focuses on the increasing number of non-Chinese heritage students enrolled in Chinese language schools and on the implications of this surge in enrollments for the Chinese language schools' operation and for the overall foreign language education system.

Student Composition of Chinese Language Schools

Students of Chinese language schools can be classified into four major groups: 1) second generation heritage language learners; 2) first generation heritage language learners; 3) learners with Chinese heritage background who do not speak Mandarin in the family; and 4) non-Chinese heritage language learners.

Second generation heritage language learners make up the vast majority of students enrolled in Chinese language schools. The students are mostly second generation Chinese-Americans born to parents whose first language is Mandarin. Although Mandarin is usually the first language of these students, English soon becomes their primary language after they start formal schooling.

The group of first generation heritage language learners is growing rapidly, especially on the West Coast, because the United States has opened its doors to the People's Republic of China for the last two decades. These students' language abilities vary according to how many years of schooling they received in their native country and their length of residence in the United States. If formal schooling in their native countries was limited and they have lived in the United States for many years, their language abilities may be very similar to those of the first group.

Approximately fifteen percent of all students enrolled in Chinese language schools are from a Chinese family whose parents speak in a dialect or language other than Mandarin. These Chinese heritage non-Mandarin-speaking learners usually are exposed to Chinese culture at home, and their parents may be able to help them with learning Chinese characters. However, they lack opportunities for listening to and speaking in Mandarin at home. Usually, these students are placed in the same classrooms with heritage students; in some cases, they may be placed with non-Chinese heritage students.

The last group of students in Chinese language schools is the non-Chinese heritage learners. This group represents up to five percent of the student population in some schools, but their numbers are steadily growing. Most of them are Caucasians or Asian-Americans with no Chinese heritage background. They are either placed with other heritage students in a regular class or, if the school has the space and there are enough students to cover the operational costs, they are placed in a separate class especially designed for teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Characteristics of Non-Chinese Heritage Students

Non-Chinese heritage students in Chinese language schools range widely in age, from as young as preschool age to adult. They enroll in Chinese language schools mainly because of either a personal or family interest in Chinese culture and language, and/or possible career opportunities. Some adult students may even enroll to learn Mandarin to prepare for a business trip to Greater China. The motivation of non-Chinese heritage students, especially adults and teenagers, is usually higher than the motivation of Chinese heritage students. Unlike most of the students whose parents speak Mandarin, non-Chinese heritage students usually lack family assistance to learn the Chinese language and culture.

In addition to personal reasons, non-Chinese heritage students choose Chinese language schools to learn Mandarin Chinese for the following considerations:

- Chinese language schools usually offer their programs during weekends, when most adult students are available and school-aged children are free;
- Chinese language school tuition is much less than the tuition for postsecondary institutions and private language schools;
- Chinese language schools provide an authentic or nearly authentic environment for learning the Chinese language and culture that does not exist in regular public schools, postsecondary institutions, or private language schools;
- Chinese language schools offer extracurricular activities, such as calligraphy, brush painting, and Kung Fu, that provide students with an opportunity to learn aspects of Chinese culture not normally covered in language programs in the formal education system;
- Chinese language schools are less rigid in regard to credit requirements than formal educational institutions, and hence present less pressure.

Curriculum

As previously stated, non-Chinese heritage students are placed in Chinese language schools in two ways, depending on student enrollment as well as on the number of classrooms and appropriate teachers available. When they are placed with heritage students in a regular class, the curriculum used is designed mainly for teaching Mandarin as a primary language. This format utilizes Mandarin as the medium for instruction and focuses more on reading and writing than on speaking and listening with little exposure to Chinese grammar. The traditional phonetic symbols system is taught instead of the phonetic alphabet. Non-Chinese heritage students may even be placed in a beginning class with students who are much younger; they thus learn from materials that are not appropriate for their age and maturity level.

If the school in which they enroll has sufficient resources, non-Chinese heritage students have a better chance of being placed in a class designed specifically for their level. In this case, the content of instruction focuses on conversational Chinese. Speaking and listening are emphasized heavily over reading and writing. Culture is also important in terms of content priority. However, because these students are still relatively new to Chinese language schools and tend to enroll for shorter periods of time than other students, the Chinese language schools are still in a process of developing a special curriculum to meet the needs of these students.

Instructional Materials

No standardized textbooks or other materials currently exist for teaching non-Chinese heritage learners, a situation similar to that found in high school Chinese programs (Moore, et al., 1992). If non-Chinese heritage students are placed in regular classes, they are generally taught with the same textbooks used for heritage students. For those placed in classes specifically designed for non-Chinese heritage students, instructional materials vary widely, depending on the preference of individual teachers or schools.

As mentioned earlier, the instructional content of special classes for non-Chinese heritage students focuses mainly on conversational Chinese. Teaching materials for these classes are therefore centered around conversation-based materials, such as *New Chinese 300* published by the Beijing Language Institute and *Speak Mandarin in Five Hundred/One Thousand Words* published by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission in Taiwan. Some of the textbooks commonly used in high schools or universities, including *Chinese Primer* and *Practical Chinese Reader*, are also adopted by language school teachers. Textbooks used for Chinese heritage students, especially those used at the beginning level, can also be adopted as the main instructional materials for these special classes. Teachers are also likely to design and develop materials they believe are appropriate for students with no Mandarin background.

In most cases, the materials used to teach non-Chinese heritage students include Pinyin as the pronunciation tool. The traditional phonetic alphabet system may also be taught, depending on the training and preference of the teacher and the materials used. The teaching of either the traditional or simplified characters (or both) also varies according to the teacher's preferences. Because age can vary widely in these classes, it is difficult to adopt any textbooks or materials that are age appropriate for everyone in the classroom.

Characteristics of Teachers

It is desirable for instructors who are selected to teach non-Chinese heritage students to possess some or all of the following qualifications: 1) experience in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language; 2) ability to speak English fluently, because English is usually the medium of instruction; 3) knowledge of Pinyin romanization, because it is usually taught for learning Mandarin pronunciation; and 4) creativity in the application of teaching methods and design of classroom activities.

However, most of the teachers who teach non-Chinese heritage students at Chinese language schools do not have training in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language. Although these teachers are usually experienced Chinese language school teachers, their knowledge of second or foreign language acquisition or linguistic theories tends to be very limited. The characteristics of these teachers are, nonetheless, not dissimilar to those of teachers for Chinese programs in public schools. A survey by Moore et al. (1992) revealed that a number of high school teachers also had little or no training in teaching the language and few instructional materials on which to rely.

However, as the number of non-Chinese heritage students increases, more and more teachers with experience in teaching Mandarin in high schools or universities are being recruited by Chinese language schools. With the enlisting of these teachers, the teaching quality is expected to improve.

Implications

The increasing number of non-Chinese heritage students in Chinese language schools is gradually changing the mission of Chinese language schools from that of solely preserving the heritage language to include teaching Mandarin as a foreign language. This trend will inevitably affect the operation of Chinese language schools and their role in the overall foreign language education system in the United States. Several factors may influence the changes in the role of Chinese language schools. First, the fact that non-Chinese heritage students choose Chinese language schools, instead of the formal educational institutions, to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture implies a recognition of Chinese language schools' accomplishments in language education. After many years, Chinese language schools are finally being recognized and accepted outside the ethnic Chinese community as viable institutions for instruction of Chinese language.

Second, as Chinese language schools begin to play a more prominent role in foreign language education, their connection to other educational sectors that traditionally offer Chinese language programs is more important than ever. Articulation is especially needed among Chinese language schools, public schools, and postsecondary institutions to ensure that transitions from one educational sector to another are made as smooth as possible. Aspects of articulation to be considered include the design of a continuity curriculum, teacher training and certification, learning outcomes assessment, credit transfer, and resource sharing.

Third, the increasing importance of Chinese language schools in foreign language education also raises concerns about how well the schools are prepared for this role. As previously mentioned, Chinese language schools fall short in the following areas in terms of teaching Chinese as a foreign language:

Teacher Qualification. Teachers in Chinese language schools often lack knowledge in linguistics and training in teaching methods.

Instructional Materials. Most of the materials used in Chinese language schools are not appropriate for non-Chinese heritage students because of age or language ability level.

Administrative Operation. Because of limited resources, Chinese language schools usually cannot place non-Chinese heritage students in classes appropriate to their age or language ability level. Such inappropriate placement may create many difficulties in teaching and learning.

Conclusion

The recent increase in enrollments of non-Chinese heritage students in Chinese language schools implies that these schools can play an expanded role in foreign language education. This change in roles also presents inevitable challenges for Chinese language schools. Regardless of where the trend may lead, the important contributions of Chinese language schools and their impact on language education cannot be underestimated. It is now time for the formal education system to work closely and collaboratively with Chinese language schools to improve the general quality of Chinese language instruction in this country.

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Extracurricular Activities

Suray H. Lee and Chang-Yu Miao

Chinese language schools, in addition to teaching Chinese language and culture to their students, aim to create a challenging and rewarding learning environment for the development of the individual students and promote a greater understanding between Chinese and American cultures. To achieve these goals, Chinese language educators provide an environment that allows students to examine the patterns, values, and customs of Chinese culture. Through an interdisciplinary approach, Chinese language schools bring together the study of Chinese literature, history, geography, philosophy, and religion. Extracurricular activities are designed to reinforce learning and teaching, and many schools participate in these activities every year. Some extracurricular activities are developed for teachers and administrators, some are for the students, and others are for the entire community.

Activities for Teachers and Administrators

Regional Teacher Conferences

Teacher conferences offer a wide range of training and seminars on important topics for today's teaching environment. Each regional conference is organized by its regional Chinese school association—the East, Midwest, South, Southeast, and West regions. The regional school associations constitute a cross-section of the diverse school members including teachers, parents, and students. Members provide valuable suggestions for creating and delivering training courses and seminars. The typical training and seminar topics include the following areas:

Teaching Methods and Materials. Participants learn new teaching methods or how to improve on their current ones. Teachers learn to combine Chinese language teaching techniques with mainstream American teaching practices. This training helps teachers better prepare students for advanced Chinese learning in colleges and for applying Chinese in a real-world environment. Computer Aided Teaching (CAT) has become a major focus recently, and in 1995 all the regional seminars had CAT or CAT-related topics on their conference agendas.

Basic Chinese Sociology. Teachers learn how to give students now immersed in the American culture a better understanding of Chinese culture. The training is designed for teachers who are interested in teaching the origins and development of different cultures, the patterns of conflict and cooperation that have shaped the relationships between cultures, and issues and problems that may affect future cultural interactions.

Seminars on Preteen and Teenage Psychology. The goal of these seminars is to provide teachers with an understanding of the methods of applied psychology, especially as they relate to teaching preteens and teenagers. Teachers can then develop appropriate teaching strategies for each age group. Developmental psychologists are invited to offer this training. The primary method of this training is classroom instruction; however, some courses include seminar discussions on experimental strategies and field studies.

School Administration and Management. Chinese language schools are now facing tight budgets and a shortage of human resources. In order to optimize the use of these limited resources, school administrators need to maximize results and minimize costs. This training prepares parents or administrators to work in schools and places that support the work of these schools. In some regions, additional training is provided to the public at large in issues in Chinese language education in a broader social and cultural context.

Education Seminars

Education seminars usually are smaller than regional teacher conferences and are held more frequently within each region or state. For example, four seminars were held in northern California in 1994, each sponsored by different foundations (e.g., the Overseas Chinese Cultural and Educational Activity Foundation and the Chinese Cultural Foundation). Regional Chinese school associations are the major organizers. Education seminars are intended to serve the needs of individual regions. Some regions will arrange a seminar when there are political processes that influence education administration. For example, in 1995 a seminar was held in the Midwest after several city governments changed their policies on the rental of high school facilities to second language education programs such as Chinese language schools. The Midwest seminar emphasized the politics of pluralism and discussed the role Chinese language education should play in shaping educational policy and in determining how resources should be allocated.

For each seminar, a keynote speaker addresses a special theme or topic. A discussion session follows the presentation. Sometimes, one or two training courses are offered to target important local teaching issues. For instance, a seminar was offered in Chicago in 1995 to discuss the SAT II: Chinese and how language teaching should cope with the test. For the most part, the participants are teachers from local Chinese language schools. This flexible format allows local issues to be addressed, such as the aims and purposes of local Chinese language school education, the educational policies of local city governments, the structure of educational systems, and the relationship between the Chinese educational institutions and the community.

Activities for the Students

Chinese Summer Camp

Chinese summer camps are designed to promote social, political, historical, and cultural understanding through total immersion in a Chinese cultural environment. Most Chinese language schools consider this experience an important part of language education, and students are encouraged to participate in this program. Summer camps have become one of the most important extracurricular activities to students and parents. These camps have been in existence for many years;

for example, the Chicago area camp has been in operation since 1976. Many areas have at least ten years' experience in offering summer culture camps.

The camp structure differs from region to region, but the program is essentially the same — speaking Chinese, learning Chinese history and culture, making Chinese arts and crafts, and practicing Chinese sports. Camps typically last one week, the age of participants ranges between eight and eighteen years old, and one to two hundred students attend each camp. The camp site is usually located at a local campground or college campus. The style of the camp is similar to regular summer camps across the United States. Camp personnel includes counselors hired to help students adjust to camp life, camp administrators, camp specialists, and medical personnel.

The people who make summer camps appealing are the teachers and instructors. Teachers from different fields and different places are recruited every year. Specialists from Greater China are brought in to teach special courses of interest to the children. These overseas teachers go from one regional summer camp to another during the summer. Because the cost of bringing teachers from overseas is high, camps will often share the expenses. The National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools (NCACLS) coordinates the schedules of these teachers to avoid scheduling conflicts among regional Chinese associations.

Academic Contests

Chinese language schools hold a variety of academic contests each year. These contests are first held at individual schools, and winners then advance into regional contests. There are no national contests because of the financial constraints on schools, parents, and students. Typically, academic contests are divided into three categories: 1) vocabulary contests; 2) writing contests, including Chinese calligraphy and Chinese essays; and 3) speaking contests. Because the underlying nature of the Chinese language is different from English, the rules of the contests are unique. These rules are defined by a consensus of teacher representatives from participating schools and reflect the students' levels and the diversity of teaching environments. For example, vocabulary contests may have several different forms of competition. Some schools present Chinese character "vocabulary cards" to students and ask them to either write down the pronunciation and meaning or pronounce and explain the word. Other schools read the word aloud and ask the students to write down its meaning and use the word in a short phrase.

Differences in the nature of Chinese calligraphy lead to a certain divergence in writing contests as well. Some schools, especially those with more adult students, tend to promote contests using the traditional brush pen. The purpose of this type of contest is to display the art, skill, and style of Chinese calligraphy. In addition to the art-oriented penmanship contest, other schools administer a writing contest using a "modern pen" (i.e., a fountain pen, ballpoint pen, or pencil) for students of different ages and with different skills. Students of higher levels listen to an instructor read a text and then write the sentences on paper. Beginners simply copy all the characters from a text provided by the school within a limited period of time. In this type of contest, accuracy weighs more than the artistic appearance of the writing.

Another type of writing contest is the essay contest, intended to encourage advanced students to study Chinese culture, history, and philosophy. The intensive study of an assigned topic, with emphasis on critical approaches to research and methods of study, is essential to writing the essay. A nationwide contest is sponsored annually by the Hai-Hwa Scholarship Program. The contest is open to all high school students in grades nine to eleven who are attending Chinese language schools.

Essays can be written in either Chinese or English and are rated by representatives from different schools serving as judges. The program awards a total of forty scholarships and certificates every year.

Speaking contests may be the only events mandatory for all students in many of the Chinese language schools. Most schools offer this public speaking opportunity and consider it fundamental to Chinese language education. Students stand in front of at least fifty people, even a few hundred people at some large speaking events, and present an issue in Chinese. Students select their own topics. This flexibility in topic selection makes students more confident and comfortable in using Chinese.

In spite of each school's effort to make the speaking contest an inspiring event, students born in the United States may feel at a disadvantage, become discouraged, and fail to participate because they believe they do not have as good a learning environment as other students whose parents are both native Chinese speakers. Recognizing this fact, many Chinese language schools have divided the contest into three major groups: Group I for new immigrants who go to Chinese language school as a continuation of their Chinese language education; Group II for American-born Chinese who learn Chinese as a second language; and Group III for students whose parent, or parents, do not speak Chinese at all. A number of regional speaking contests have already adopted this grouping strategy.

Talent Contests

Talent contests are more "talent shows" than real contests. There are no formal rules or fixed formats. The contests are usually held several times a year in conjunction with another special occasion, such as the Spring Festival or the Mid-Autumn Celebration. Unlike a conventional talent show, these talent contests focus on teamwork more than individual performances. Most of the time, each class organizes a special show, either a play, a chorus, a teaching demonstration, or a Chinese folk dance. Designating judges, selecting winners, and rewarding the participants are all optional. The goal of these contests is to teach aspects of Chinese culture that cannot be learned in the traditional classroom setting and to provide a cultural experience through teamwork and creativity.

Athletic Contests

Athletic contests usually involve the following sports: track and field, basketball, softball, baseball, soccer, and bowling. These contests are not limited to Chinese language school students. Schools also organize sporting events for parents and teachers. The most popular activities are golf, tennis, and ping-pong. To encourage sportsmanship, many events are designed to be "fun events," and are not for serious competition. Students in higher grades are often trained to be referees, judges, or event administrators. Other large-size events, which involve renting equipment and locations, are held once every two years and are often sponsored by foundations such as the Overseas Chinese Athletic Foundation.

Activities for the Community

Cultural Festivals

Chinese festivals provide opportunities for Chinese language schools to teach cultural aspects and carry out cultural activities. Each region participates in at least one Chinese festival each year. These festivals have many different formats and can be held at any time during the year. The Midwest, for example, conducted three festivals in 1995: one in association with an international cultural festival, and two on its own for Chinese New Year and Chinese Poetry Day. Festivals give students the opportunity to present what they have learned and provide them with an opportunity to practice their language skills.

Festivals celebrate modern Chinese culture as well as traditional culture. They often include dancing, cooking, painting, music, arts and crafts, poetry reading, carnival float decoration, movies, and opera. An interesting change in Chinese festivals is that they now contain more elements of modern Chinese culture than traditional elements. One reason is that an increasing number of nonnative Chinese speakers, as well as second and third generation Chinese-Americans, are involved in these Chinese festivals. Another compelling reason for this trend is that today's advanced technology has increased exponentially the rate of communication between the East and West, especially with improved accessibility to the Internet. The pursuit of Chinese culture for the younger generation reflects these changes.

Community Services

More people than ever realize that their quality of life depends on the commitments they make to their community. Chinese language schools have traditionally offered services and assistance to support the needs of the surrounding community. Most Chinese language schools offer free adult Chinese conversation courses. A number of Chinese language schools have established Chinese cultural and language resource centers. Chinese language schools also help the local community by offering Chinese courses as well as translation and interpretation services for a minimal fee. Schools also play an important role in various cultural exchange programs between American and Chinese language schools, cities, businesses, and communities. They help coordinate some important international conferences such as the International Seminar on Computer Aided Chinese Language Instruction. Scholarships are offered by all regional Chinese language school associations to encourage underprivileged students to learn Chinese. Some Chinese language schools strive to develop specialized training options that can be used by the local community, outside of classroom training. All Chinese language schools recognize that they can succeed only if they maintain close contact with the community and provide services to the community. Chinese language schools provide far more services than their names imply.

Conclusion

In general, the variety of extracurricular activities and contests offered by Chinese language schools is intended to encourage student learning and to further expand language and cultural experiences into new areas. Chinese language schools have been modifying their educational goals and directions to best serve the ever changing, multicultural society in the United States. The extracurricular activities contribute to the variety of opportunities available to teachers, students, and the community, and should continue to expand to include both traditional and modern cultural activities. Chinese language schools offer an excellent opportunity for students to apply what they have learned and to develop the competencies necessary for personal advancement in the future. Through purposeful involvement with people, events, and communities, Chinese language schools serve their communities by providing access to the highest quality of education.

List of Contributors

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Chinese Language Summer Camps for Students

Cathy E-Ling Chai

Since their inception in 1976, Chinese language summer camps in the United States have grown nationwide. The largest summer camp program in the United States, operated by the United States East Coast Association of Chinese Schools, has enrollments of five hundred to seven hundred students annually.

These summer camps give Chinese-American teenagers the opportunity to enrich their Chinese heritage, appreciate Chinese art, participate in Chinese cultural activities, and study Mandarin. These programs cultivate a stronger ethnic identity and encourage social interaction among the participants. One week away from home in a live-in summer camp can also provide a chance for children to be independent, to socialize, and to live with others in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Participants in junior high or beyond are encouraged to take part in the leadership programs designed to develop codes of conduct and volunteerism, and to promote leadership qualities.

The Structure of Chinese Language Summer Camps

The summer camps are organized jointly by local associations of Chinese language schools and overseas Chinese cultural centers across the United States. Sources of funding for the summer camps include tuition, donations from local companies and individuals, and grants from the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (OCAC), an organization affiliated with the government of Taiwan. The structure of these summer camps is as follows:

Organization

To operate a Chinese language summer camp effectively requires a large number of experienced staffers. They are primarily volunteers appointed by the principal and board members of the Chinese language schools. The staff is divided into several sections charged with specific responsibilities:

- *administration:* purchase supplies and order student uniforms, certificates, trophies, and signs for use on campsites;
- *campsite operation:* identify and rent campsites, prepare press releases, purchase safety insurance policies, coordinate program schedules, arrange opening and commencement ceremonies, and assign dormitories;

- *curriculum development and teaching faculty:* select instructors, design the curriculum, prepare, purchase, and distribute teaching materials;

- *extracurricular activities:* organize cultural programs, including exhibits, movies, dance parties, other evening social activities, and compiles camp photo albums;

- *finances:* handle budgets and prepare for independent audits;

- *health unit:* provide general medical care to participants;

- *maintenance:* maintain campsite facilities and equipment;

- *registration:* review student applications, register and admit students, distribute student uniforms, and provide information;

- *safety and security:* oversee security and order in campsites, provide training for safety and security procedures, select safety and security instructors;

- *transportation:* arrange shuttle buses to and from campsites and provide vehicles for transportation of program supplies.

Student Qualifications

In general, students of all nationalities ranging from eight to eighteen years old are considered qualified applicants. Because all classes are conducted in Mandarin Chinese, students enrolled in these summer camps have been exclusively Chinese-Americans. In the South, membership in a local Chinese language school association is required.

Program Sites and Sizes

There are thirty-three campsites across the United States, with fourteen on the East Coast, seven on the West Coast, and twelve in the Midwest. These campsites are generally located at universities or other scenic areas. These programs are divided into live-in programs and commuter programs. On average, the enrollment in a summer camp program ranges from 100 to 150 participants. The Chinese Youth Live-in Summer Camp (sponsored by the Houston Chinese Schools Association) enrolled 130 students when the program started in 1976. In 1995, 450 students attended. This program is recognized as the largest live-in Chinese language summer camp program in the United States. The largest commuter program, which is sponsored by the East Coast Chinese Schools Association, has an annual student enrollment of 500 to 700.

Program Time Frame and Duration

Summer camps last anywhere from four to eight days, from late June to early August. Most programs are one week long.

Tuition

The tuition for Chinese language summer camp programs varies according to local program content and depends on what additional funds are available to support the program. The tuition generally ranges from $200 to $300 per student.

Teaching Faculty

In general, the teaching faculty is composed of qualified individuals recruited locally by the principals of Chinese language schools. These individuals are volunteers, who usually receive a stipend of $100 to $250 for miscellaneous expenses and to cover transportation.

Other qualified members of the faculty from Taiwan are appointed by OCAC. These individuals are experienced school teachers who have demonstrated excellent teaching performance overseas in their areas of specialization, and who are recommended by officials at the provincial, municipal, and local levels in Taiwan. They are specifically appointed to teach classes like Chinese folk arts, folk dance, martial arts, painting, and calligraphy.

Teaching Assistants/Counselors and Teachers' Aides/Assistant Counselors

Qualified young people over the age of fifteen are recruited to assist in teaching and/or supervising students. These individuals are bilingual students enrolled in a local Chinese language school, a Chinese language class either in regular high schools or at the university. They are interviewed and selected by the principal of a Chinese language school and by the local high school Chinese language teachers. Students who have previously served as teachers' aides/assistant counselors with excellent performance ratings are selected to be teaching assistants/counselors.

The selection of these teaching assistants/counselors and teachers' aides/assistant counselors is an important part of the Chinese language summer camps. To ensure fairness and equal opportunity, the interviews are conducted by panels of three to five people. Chinese-American high school students are proud to be selected to serve as either teaching assistants/counselors or teachers' aides/assistant counselors. They serve as role models for their peers, and their responsibilities help prepare them for leadership positions. Working closely with teachers or school officials, they are encouraged to communicate with other students in the program as a way to build a rapport between the students. They also provide a crucial link between teachers and students and help bridge the generation gap caused by language or cultural barriers.

Specifically, the teaching assistants/counselors and teachers' aides/assistant counselors are entrusted with the following duties:

- assisting in registration, checking students in and out of the campsites

- monitoring student activities, maintaining discipline, and informing appropriate school officials of any unusual incidents
- leading student activities, ensuring that students are not missing from group activities, and enforcing safety procedures
- tutoring junior students
- assisting in keeping classrooms, dining rooms, and dormitories clean
- attending training seminars and program review committee meeting.

Camp Program Officials

Qualified individuals are selected by the principals of local Chinese language schools to serve as program staffers. They are volunteers interested in international schools who, upon selection, assume responsibilities such as administration, registration, camp organization, health care, fundraising, transportation, maintenance, safety, and security.

Curriculum and Extracurricular Activities

It is a challenge to make the one-week intensive program informative, interesting, and useful to a group of eight- to eighteen-year-old students. The classes are usually designed to encourage interaction and full participation, by mixing field trips and cultural activities with academic instruction.

A typical day's schedule is as follows:

7 A.M.-9 A.M.: breakfast, followed by field trips with photography sessions, and cultural and social activities;

9 A.M.-12 P.M.: morning classes;

12 P.M.-1 P.M.: lunch and individual activities;

1 P.M.-5 P.M.: afternoon classes;

5 P.M.-7 P.M.: dinner at campsite for live-in camp programs participants;

7 P.M.-9 P.M.: extracurricular activities such as athletic competitions, dances, and movies.

Academic and nonacademic classes generally consist of the following:

- *Mandarin Chinese language:* spoken Chinese through verbal communication, debates, speech contests, and public speeches; reading and writing Chinese are less emphasized because of personnel restrictions and time constraints;

- *Chinese culture:* Chinese history, geography, philosophy, tradition, festivals, and customs;
- *Chinese folk art:* calligraphy, pottery making, woodblock printing, stone seal carving, shadow puppet theater, cotton and silk screen printing, handicrafts, Chinese chess, traditional opera, and Chinese cooking;
- *Chinese dance and music:* folk songs, minority folk dances, and Chinese modern dance;
- *Chinese martial arts:* various types of martial arts, dragon and lion dances, and traditional Chinese sports;
- *field trips:* activities such as swimming, ball games, boating, mountain climbing, picnics, and campfires;
- *evening entertainment:* dance parties, talent shows, and movies;
- *special lectures:* when appropriate, lectures on such topics as health care, environmental protection, interpersonal skills, and parent-child relationships.

Current Challenges

Chinese language summer camps across the United States have educated thousands of second generation Chinese-Americans in the past twenty-two years. Although gratified by the remarkable impact, educators and students alike have recognized the need to further strengthen and enrich the programs. A number of issues have been identified:

Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Teachers need to continue exploring innovative teaching methods in order to make classes interesting and informative. Technology should be utilized to enhance the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Teaching materials should be updated and strengthened. An advisory mechanism should be set up in order to acquire up-to-date information on teacher training, curriculum design, and student participation.

Discipline versus Creativity

Ensuring the success of the program while looking out for the well-being of over one hundred students at a campsite is a major task for camp organizers. It is a constant challenge to respect the need for students' individuality within the context of group dynamics. Program officials and teachers must enforce discipline while promoting creativity.

Parental Needs versus Student Needs

Chinese language summer camps are tailored for the children of first generation Chinese immigrants in the United States and other interested Chinese-American youngsters. Camp officials and teachers are generally first generation Chinese immigrants, who tend to overemphasize traditional Chinese teachings and, in so doing, neglect the real needs of students who grow up in mainstream American society. To fully integrate the traditional perspectives of parents and the practical needs of students, camp organizers and teachers should consult with their students and seek their active participation in designing curriculum, selecting teaching materials, and adopting applicable teaching methods.

Diversity versus Continuity

Because of budgetary and personnel constraints, local Chinese language schools take turns organizing and operating Chinese language summer camps. Such a system encourages diversity and wider participation. However, it has created a lack of continuity and has made it difficult to maintain a cohesive program from year to year, correct problems, or seek further improvement. Ideally, camp organizers should work closely together to coordinate programs with cohesive guidelines.

Other Summer Chinese Programs

In addition to short-term summer camps, some local and regional Chinese language schools offer intensive summer programs. These programs are based on the weekend classes offered during the school year and run Monday through Friday. In California, where there are many Chinese immigrants, intensive summer programs are operated by private organizations to provide tutorial lessons to Chinese-American students during the summer. There are also Chinese language child-care centers set up for younger children of Chinese immigrants.

The summer intensive programs and child-care centers operate five days a week from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. Although students can be enrolled for five days a week, parents often elect to place their children in these programs for only two or three days a week. The classes are generally held in rented classrooms of a local Chinese language school or a regular neighborhood elementary or high school. The tuition for these programs is between $70 and $90 per week. Lunches and snacks are provided. The instructors are usually certified teachers who teach in regular elementary and high schools. Some schools hire university students to be teaching assistants.

Unlike Chinese language summer camps, these intensive summer programs are more academic and project oriented. Morning classes focus on subjects such as English, mathematics, natural science, history, computer science, and Chinese. Afternoon classes are reserved for cultural activities. Fridays are often set aside for field trips.

Looking Ahead

Much has been accomplished in the last decade in terms of the scope and impact of the Chinese language summer camps in the United States. As Chinese-Americans further integrate into mainstream U.S. society, they become increasingly aware of the importance of bridging the gap between the Chinese and American cultures. Chinese language schools seek to provide a vital link between these two dynamic cultures by starting with young children who are more receptive to language learning and cultural adaptation. The organizers and teachers who are devoted to this goal hope that the students who benefit from these summer camp programs and summer intensive Chinese programs at the community level will be inspired to promote diversity. As Greater China plays an increasingly visible role in the global arena, more and more non-Chinese heritage learners have become interested in Chinese values, culture, and customs. Closer cooperation between the United States and China implies that Americans will have to improve their ability to communicate in Chinese with people in Greater China. The organizers and teachers of the Chinese language summer camps and intensive Chinese programs hope to identify ways to expand the scope of the programs beyond the needs of Chinese-Americans exclusively.

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The Institute of Chinese Culture in Houston, Texas
The Texas and Chinese Cultural Center Chinese School in Houston, Texas
Michigan Youth Summer Camp
The Association of Chinese Schools, New England

Translated by Wendy Lyle

Short-term Professional Development for Teachers

Yu-Min Peng

The survey conducted by the National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools revealed the following geographical distribution of students in Chinese language schools in the United States: 36,794 students were enrolled in California, 26,243 in the East, 8,236 in the South, 6,411 in the Midwest, 2,797 in the Northwest, 1,225 in the Southwest, and 969 in Hawaii and Alaska. Regardless of where students are enrolled, they, along with their parents, are longing for an enjoyable and interesting language learning environment. These issues are now becoming primary concerns for Chinese language school administrators and teachers.

The Need for Qualified Teachers

As enrollment has grown in Chinese language schools, the demand for qualified teachers has increased as well. In order to teach Chinese language and culture effectively to a large number of students, it is necessary to have a steady supply of qualified teachers who ideally are fluent in both Chinese and English, well versed in Chinese language teaching methods, and familiar with the United States education system.

However, the majority of Chinese language teachers are first generation Chinese immigrants who have established themselves as middle-class Chinese-Americans. They are often intellectuals and professionals in fields other than Chinese language education. Although some become full-time teachers of Chinese after years of training in accredited Chinese language teaching and education programs, most are parents who volunteer their time. These volunteers teach Chinese for a few hours after school during the week or on weekends, because of a personal interest in and commitment to preserving Chinese heritage. Yet, in spite of their commitment and dedication, these teachers are often ill equipped to provide students with meaningful lessons. Many of them lack training in language teaching methodology and educational psychology.

For some time, educators have recognized that there is a shortage of qualified teachers of Chinese for K–12 students throughout the United States. Yet, the problem is most acute in Chinese language schools. The shortage of qualified teachers in Chinese language schools is due to a number of factors:

- Chinese language school teachers usually have full-time jobs and therefore, do not have the extra time to become certified by the state or to receive training from graduate schools.

- Over half of the teachers in Chinese language schools volunteer their time because their own children are enrolled in the program. When their children leave the program, these teachers stop volunteering. These volunteers are not interested in full-time teacher training programs.

- There is limited funding to employ qualified long-term teachers. Chinese language schools are funded mainly through tuition and donations from local organizations as well as through small grants of $500 to $1,000 from the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (OCAC), which is affiliated with the government of Taiwan.

- Almost no universities in the United States offer teacher training programs designed specifically for heritage language school teachers.

Short-term Training Programs Sponsored by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission

The shortage of qualified teachers has prompted the organizers of Chinese language schools to turn to OCAC for additional assistance and financial support. Under the auspices of OCAC, a number of short-term training programs for Chinese language teachers have been established. These programs are held annually in the United States as well as in Taiwan.

Teacher Training Seminars in Taiwan for Overseas Chinese Teachers

A two-week teacher training program, the first program sponsored by OCAC in the United States, is offered every summer in Taiwan. This program is divided into two sections, with classes on "Chinese Language and Culture" and on "Chinese Performing Arts." OCAC offers teachers subsidies for training expenses, room and board, and for the round-trip airfares to and from Taiwan. It also recruits seminar lecturers. Chinese teachers from any part of the United States can apply through local Chinese cultural centers. Because of budgetary constraints, the number of teachers selected for this program is very small. Furthermore, Taiwan is a long way from the United States, and many teachers find it difficult to leave their families and regular jobs for two weeks.

Teacher Training Camps in the United States

In conjunction with OCAC, Chinese cultural centers and associations of Chinese language schools sponsor summer teacher training camps. These programs are designed to provide an alternative to the two-week training program in Taiwan. The summer camps provide an opportunity for teachers of Chinese from different areas to exchange information on teaching methods and teaching materials. These camps are held every summer at local Chinese cultural centers throughout the country and are generally two to five days long. Accommodations are provided at the campsites for out-of-town participants, whereas local participants are encouraged to commute.

During the program, group discussions are held for participants to exchange ideas on issues such as curriculum development and teaching techniques. Participants also attend specialized lectures on Chinese culture in subject areas taught in Chinese language schools. The local associations of

Chinese language schools recruit experienced lecturers on specialized subjects. OCAC also invites two or three outstanding teachers of Chinese from elementary or high schools in Taiwan to give lectures each summer.

Annual Regional Conferences for Chinese Language School Teachers

Seminars and workshops on teacher training are often incorporated into annual regional conferences of teachers of Chinese held throughout the United States. These programs are designed to accommodate both beginning and experienced teachers by providing basic training in educational psychology as well as information on new teaching methods and materials. The largest conference is organized by the United States East Coast Association of Chinese Schools, which has taken place each May for the past twenty-two years. Equally important is the annual conference administered by the Southern California Council of Chinese Schools. The annual teachers' conference sponsored by the Overseas Chinese Cultural Center in Michigan is another important event that provides advice to teachers. These conferences serve as models to associations for Chinese language schools in other regions for developing similar programs.

Annual Regional Forum for Chinese Language School Teachers

In 1992, the Southern California Council of Chinese Schools launched an annual conference to provide a forum for teachers and administrators of Chinese language schools to exchange ideas on teaching methods and activities. Topics addressed include fundraising, curriculum development, teacher recruitment, computer-assisted instruction, the role of parents in Chinese language schools, and the impact of Chinese language schools on Chinese language instruction in the United States. The annual conference is a two-day program that includes workshops, lectures, group discussions, and cultural activities. The presenters are often principals of local Chinese language schools. Specialists from universities or research institutions are invited to address issues pertinent to language instruction. Judging from the success of the first three annual conferences, organizers are confident that Chinese language school teachers will continue to benefit from sharing experiences in such a forum.

Challenges and Recommendations

Chinese language schools have evolved considerably in the past decade. Those who are committed to teaching Chinese language and culture to future generations of Chinese-Americans and non-Chinese heritage learners recognize that the continuing success of Chinese language schools depends on continued volunteer efforts and effective sharing of up-to-date information. They face many challenging issues, such as how to provide incentives to volunteers, how to motivate students, how to establish links and coordinate teaching efforts with colleges and universities that offer Chinese language programs, and how to improve teacher training programs. To meet these challenges, Chinese language schools could benefit from consulting with language experts and updating teacher training programs.

1. *Development of an Advisory Mechanism.* In addition to providing existing assistance, local cultural centers should recruit educational consultants to serve as resources for schools and to solve problems on a regular basis. These consultants would include professors of Chinese language and literature and other experts with backgrounds in education or Chinese who would be willing to hold regular office hours and conduct workshops in various Chinese language schools to provide advice on school administration, curriculum design, and issues regarding student motivation.

2. *Upgrading of Teacher Training Programs.* A number of administrators and teachers of Chinese associated with Chinese language schools have attended training programs and workshops sponsored by local Chinese school associations in the past decade, and many are regular attendees. Although some frequent participants find these training programs informative and effective, a number have expressed concern that the programs are often redundant and lack up-to-date information. New ideas should be solicited to enrich teacher training programs. New Chinese language teachers should be encouraged to attend and contribute creative and innovative ideas. Specialists should be invited to present lectures on new research findings and current academic trends.

Conclusion

Following a decade of changes and growth, Chinese language schools are determined to improve Chinese language and cultural programs at the community level. In the next decade, more short-term training programs should be conducted to allow more teachers to benefit from them. Greater effort should be made to refine and expand national and regional teacher training programs while striving to make educational guidance cohesive and readily available at the community level. These programs will result in an increasing number of professionally trained teachers who will be able to ensure that the education in Chinese schools is valuable and meaningful for students.

List of Contributors

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Translated by Wendy Lyle

Obtaining Credit from Local School Districts

Rae Shae Chen

Chinese is usually the first language for many Chinese-Americans born or raised in the United States. Although most parents are eager to ensure that their children's education prepares them for merging into mainstream America, they are also concerned with finding ways to preserve and develop their children's native language abilities. In many cases, however, the children's knowledge of Chinese language and culture begins to weaken once they enter the American education system. To preserve and develop their children's native language and to maintain their cultural heritage, many parents enroll their children in Chinese language schools.

The early success of these schools was largely due to the full involvement of parents, because the majority of teaching and administrative positions were filled by parent volunteers, most of whom have college or graduate degrees but are not certified teachers. However, in the late 1980s, the structure of many Chinese language schools gradually changed, prompting a dramatic increase in student enrollment. Many parent volunteers were replaced by qualified teachers even though most of the parents possessed college or graduate degrees. Qualified teachers working for public schools or junior colleges often willingly volunteer their personal time during the weekend to educate the new generations of Chinese-American students.

The Establishment of Credit Classes

In the late 1980s, an increasing number of high school students enrolled in Chinese language schools. This increase in enrollment can be attributed to two factors. The first is the rise in the number of new immigrants. The second is the economic prosperity of Greater China, which has inspired many parents to enroll their children in Chinese language schools where they can attain functional proficiency levels in Chinese.

The success of many Chinese language schools has encouraged teachers and administrators to explore how their students could be awarded credit by the formal education system for their work in Chinese language schools. Usually, most high school students devote Saturdays to extracurricular activities, such as band practice, sports, and cheerleading, to strengthen their abilities beyond academic performance and to fulfill the extracurricular requirements for university admissions. Obviously, students who choose to stay in Chinese language schools are at a disadvantage compared to their peers in terms of extracurricular activities. Students must choose between continuing their Chinese education for language and heritage enrichment only or participating in high school extracurricular activities to meet the requirements for university admission. In addition, although many Chinese language school students have acquired Chinese language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, these skills have never been officially acknowledged by most public school systems. The students still need to take other foreign language courses to fulfill the school's requirement for graduation. Hence, in the late 1980s, many Chinese language schools started contacting local school districts regarding the possibility for Chinese language schools to award high school credits.

The Establishment of Classes for Transfer Credit in Chinese Language Schools in California

Most Chinese language schools were established by renting facilities in local public schools. In spite of the cooperative nature of their relationship with the school districts, the pilot Chinese language schools soon found that they had limited support when they sought to obtain official language credits for their students.

The Cerritos Chinese school in southern California launched an initiative in 1982 for developing Chinese classes for which its students could be granted high school credits. Its proposal recommended that the school district grant recognition for each high school student enrolled in Cerritos Chinese school. However, the school district rejected the proposal. For four years, Chinese language school officials regularly invited the school district superintendent and principals to observe their classes. They also strongly encouraged parents to participate in meetings of the bilingual committee to articulate their children's need to receive foreign language credits for their work in Chinese language schools. In 1986, a new superintendent was sworn in and the students of Cerritos Chinese school were finally able to receive high school credits for their efforts.

The successful campaign of the Cerritos Chinese school to obtain foreign language credits encouraged other Chinese language schools in southern California to contact their local school districts to obtain similar recognition for their students. In 1987, Yuline Chinese school students were granted credit by the local school district, followed in 1988 by San Marino Chinese school students. To date, students in twenty-eight Chinese language schools in southern California have successfully received credit from their local school districts for their Chinese classes.

Although the total number of students who have obtained credits from various Chinese language schools nationwide is not available, enrollment figures from local Chinese language schools in southern California show considerable growth in the number of students during the 1994–1995 school year. Irvine Chinese school issued credits to approximately 70 students, and approximately 60 high school students obtained credits from Cerritos Chinese school. About 120 high school students gained Chinese credits from San Marino Chinese school, where the enrollment has been increasing over the last three years.

The process of allowing students in Chinese language schools to receive credits for their Chinese classes from their local school district is similar to that in southern California for Chinese language schools in northern California. The Palo Alto school district approved a proposal to issue five units of credit to high school students enrolled in Palo Alto Chinese school for sixty hours of instruction in 1990. In addition to the hours of instruction, the school district also approved a Chinese proficiency test that grants another five units to the students who pass the test. Eight other Chinese language schools in northern California have obtained approval from their local school districts for their students to be awarded high school credits in recent years. The growing number of credit classes in Chinese language schools in northern and southern California provides a precedent for students to obtain foreign language credits for their course work in other Chinese language schools as well.

Application Process for Transfer Credit in California

In order to apply for transfer credit from local school districts, a Chinese language school must submit an application package with a detailed proposal, such as the one enclosed in the appendix, that describes the Chinese language school and provides any other relevant information about the school and staff. It should include the references of the school and follow the California Education Code guidelines for applying for transfer credit. It should also list and provide a detailed outline of the courses for which students should receive credit. Because Saturday Chinese language school sessions are usually three or four hours long, the total instructional hours will be less than the public school foreign language instructional hours—five hours per week. Chinese language schools must establish a credit-hour plan to show additional assignments beyond the regular instructional hours to fulfill the requirement. Some suggested assignments and activities for additional credits are book and film reports; written reports on specific topics such as Chinese new year, festivals, Chinese history, current events, written weekly journals, speech competitions, essay competitions, Chinese cultural visits to museums or special exhibits, and volunteer work at Chinese senior centers. In addition to the activities suggested here, each Chinese language school has designed various activities as part of credit classes that enrich the language education. For example, Irvine Chinese school in southern California has included a Chinese karaoke singing contest, and San Marino Chinese school has designed Chinese debate activities to enhance students' language abilities.

The proposal should include a section devoted to the issue of report cards. The report card, which could also be in the form of a letter, should have all the information regarding the student, the high school he/she attends and the units gained during the semester. The records are then sent to the local school district or the student's high school. After the school district approves the transfer credit, a follow-up letter to the school district is recommended, indicating that the language school will follow the procedures required by the school district.

The Chinese Regents Examination in New York

Approximately seventy Chinese language schools are located in New York State; however, none of them have yet received the authorization to grant their students high school credits for their Chinese classes. The number of public schools offering Chinese classes has been increasing, which led to the development and implementation of the Regents test for Chinese in 1986. The Regents test is an academic performance test offered to junior or senior high school students taking Chinese as a second language and Chinese language school students who have been enrolled in any Chinese language school in New York State for at least three years. A Regents diploma is issued to all students who pass the test and is favorably looked upon by college and university application committees. In addition, students may receive foreign language credits when they enter colleges or universities.

The Regents Chinese test is divided into two sections. The first section is a listening and oral proficiency test administered by each Chinese language school. In this section, the teacher introduces a topic of conversation, and students have to respond with at least six complete sentences in order to construct a conversation representative of their oral proficiency. If a student answers simply "yes" or "no" the response is considered invalid. The remainder of the test, which counts for seventy-six percent, is administered by state personnel in June. The test includes listening comprehension, language usage (grammar, idioms, etc.), and writing. In the writing section, students are asked to write a letter and an essay on a specific topic. For each assignment, students are required to compose at least six to ten sentences to demonstrate their writing proficiency in Chinese.

Conclusion

To promote the students' development in Chinese, there is strong evidence that the ongoing movement toward establishing transfer credit for students in Chinese classes will continue to build momentum in many communities. In addition to preserving Chinese language and cultural heritage, it is clear that Chinese language schools also provide students with competitive skills for the future. The criteria for gaining foreign language credits for students should be made accessible to all Chinese language school administrators and teachers interested in having their students apply for credit from the formal education system. Educators and policy makers should seriously take this matter into consideration and assist Chinese language schools in retaining their students.

Appendix: Sample Documents

1. Sample letter to apply for transferable credits

Dear Mr./Ms. (Name),

This letter confirms our telephone conversation on (date) in which we sought your approval of Chinese language courses offered at North Orange County Chinese School (NOCCS) as accredited foreign language instruction for students in the Brea Olinda Unified School District (BOUSD). The request is made pursuant to the California Education Code and California Administrative Code, Title 5, wherein Chinese is one of the approved foreign languages cited under Section 51244.

Attached for your consideration is a proposal that briefly describes NOCCS and provides course outlines, with other relevant information about our school and staff. We hope that high school credits will be given to BOUSD students who successfully complete our Chinese I, II, III, and IV course work as outlined in the attached document. We believe that receiving high school credits for their efforts would be a powerful motivational force for our students. In fact, it would be a deserved recognition for them because their Saturday mornings over the years were not spent on the playground but in the classroom learning to master a foreign language.

2. Follow-up letter to the response of the local school district

Dear Mr./Ms. (Name)

Thank you for your letter of (date) confirming that BOUSD will accept our credits for (school name) high school students who successfully complete our school's Chinese I, II, III, and IV course work. We will follow the procedures as outlined in your letter regarding the application for credits and the sending of students' transcripts.

3. Format of the Proposal

According to the *Handbook of the Application of Credit Chinese Class*, published by the Southern California Council of Chinese Schools, the format of the proposal is as follows:

a) Summary of Course Plan for Credit Chinese Courses

Course	Length of Study	Credits Per Year*
Chinese I	1 Year**	10
Chinese II	1 Year	10
Chinese III	1 Year	10
Chinese IV	1 Year	10

Notes: * Each student can earn up to 40 cumulative credits in four years.
** One year is equivalent to 160 hours of Chinese instruction.

b) Course Outline

Chinese I
- study Chinese phonetics
- understand simple conversations

Chinese II
- read, write, speak, and comprehend Chinese words and phrases
- memorize words, phrases, and lessons
- speak in complete sentences that apply to daily situations, such as going to the library, the park, the playground, the zoo, church, the bookstore, and the restaurant
- learn useful Chinese proverbs and their meanings
- learn about selected outstanding people from various periods of Chinese history and their accomplishments
- learn Chinese manners
- begin basic speech training

Chinese III
- read, write, and speak advanced words, sentences, and paragraphs
- analyze different literary writing styles and skills
- study ancient Chinese poetry
- learn about great Chinese ancient scholars and their philosophies
- learn additional Chinese proverbs and their meanings
- read selected legends
- study Chinese family structure and moral concepts
- appreciate contemporary works created by children
- learn about selected outstanding people from different periods of Chinese history and their accomplishments

Chinese IV
- increase reading comprehension through vocabulary acquisition
- understand short lectures on familiar topics
- express emotions, desires, and opinions orally
- learn to appreciate Chinese literature and culture
- write compositions on literary topics
- identify selected significant names and events in Chinese history and literature
- begin advanced speech training

c) Credit-Hour Plan and Suggested Assignments and Activities for Additional Credits

The proposal should include information about how the Chinese language school plans to make up for the difference in instructional hours, because Saturday Chinese language school sessions are usually only three to four hours long, as opposed to four to five hours of language instruction per week in the public school system.

d) Report Card or Letter

At the end of the semester or school year, a report card or letter is issued showing the student's name, student identification number, grade, attending high school, and the units gained. The work accomplished is reported to the local school district or the high school to show the completion of the course. According to the requirement of each school district and the proposal presented by each Chinese language school, Chinese classes for which credits are granted in each school district vary significantly and can be categorized as either core courses or electives, and for letter grades (A, B, C, etc.) or nongrade (pass/fail). A sample letter follows:

Dear Mr./Ms. (Name)

This letter is to certify that (student name), a ninth grade student at (high school name), has successfully completed the Chinese I course at North Orange County Chinese School during the 1994–1995 school year. I understand that BOUSD will grant (student name) ten high school credits for the successful completion of this one of four approved Chinese language courses at NOCCS.
Attach: (student name)'s 1994–1995 NOCCS transcripts.

List of Contributors

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Awarding Credit Through Testing — the Case of the San Francisco Unified School District

Ju-Ching Liu

In California, twenty to thirty school districts currently grant foreign language credits to students who attend heritage community language schools, and the number is growing every year. The policy and requirements vary among school districts in minor details. This article describes the procedures and policy requirements of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD).

History

In October 1989, the President of the Association of Northern California Chinese Schools (ANCCS), Tso-Ping Yeh, attended a conference entitled "A Symposium on Chinese Language Instruction in California" sponsored by the Art Research and Curriculum Association Inc. (ARC), a nonprofit organization. In the meeting, Tso-Ping Yeh asked if there were ways to officially recognize the work of students who attend Chinese language schools. The California Education Department representatives who were present referred him to the California Education Code, Section 51243-51244, which requires California school districts to give credit to students in grades nine to twelve for courses taken in language schools in the following languages: Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Spanish. This information enabled Chinese language schools to begin applying for course credit for their students by submitting the appropriate information describing their program and curriculum to the school district for evaluation.

California Education Code

According to the California Education Code, students who attend private language schools must meet certain requirements to obtain credit from local school districts. One of these requirements is the development and administration of an annual test. In the spring of 1992, after assessment tests were developed for first- and second-year Chinese, the SFUSD received the first applications for high school credits from students attending Chinese language schools.

In September of 1993, SFUSD recommended the implementation of a new district board policy to outline procedures for granting high school students credit for attending language schools. This new policy allows students who have met all requirements and followed all procedures to earn up to ten units of foreign language credit each year for a maximum of twenty units to apply toward high school graduation.

Procedures and Requirements

The San Francisco Unified School District grants course credit only to students of language schools who have submitted or will be submitting a Private Language School Application and who are participating or plan to participate in the High School Foreign Language Credit Program. This application form requests basic information about the school such as its name and address, the principal's name and phone number, days and hours of operation, and current enrollment.

The principal of the Chinese language school also must submit the course syllabus (including the scope, sequence, and course requirements), a list of teachers and the courses they teach, and a list of the school's Board of Directors. Approximately a month later, the principal is notified of his or her school's eligibility to participate in that year's program.

High school students who attend Chinese language schools and who wish to earn course credits need to obtain the Student Application Packet from a school counselor at an SFUSD high school. The deadline for student application is in October each year.

The Student Application Packet consists of the Board of Education policy, a student checklist, a student application form, a student notification form, and a language school application. The student application form must be signed by the principal of the Chinese language school and the principal of the SFUSD high school to verify the student's enrollment in both schools. Appropriate forms must be completed and mailed back to SFUSD before the deadline.

After SFUSD receives a completed application, a language specialist will review the Chinese language school's eligibility and evaluate the student's application. If the application is approved, the student will be informed by the SFUSD and notified that in order to obtain credit, he/she must satisfactorily complete the Chinese language school course and pass the district-wide language performance test given at the end of the school year.

The District-wide Language Performance Test

The district-wide language performance test was developed by SFUSD foreign language teachers based on the high school curriculum and instructional materials for native English speakers. The test is one and one-half hours long, and there are two levels offered: Chinese I and II. The test contains sections on writing, listening, and reading.

Students who pass the district-wide performance test earn ten credits for the year just as students who take a foreign language in high school. Students may register for one level of the test per year. Although students can take the Level II test without taking the Level I test, they cannot take the Level I test after taking the Level II test. In order to maximize the number of credits they receive, students generally take the Level I test first. The school district then reports the credits earned to the high schools the students attend.

Because of time and budget constraints brought on by the increased number of students taking the test, the test committee is currently reviewing the SAT II: Chinese, offered by the College Board, for use as the primary assessment test for students of Chinese language schools. The correlation between credits per letter grade and the score on the SAT II: Chinese is yet to be defined.

Qualified Schools and Students

Since 1993, six Chinese language schools in the SFUSD have been approved for transfer credits. In the 1993–1994 school year, 161 students from Chinese language schools were awarded high school credits, and in 1994–1995, 130 students received credit. Many of these students started attending a Chinese language school at the age of four or five. In addition, ninety-five percent live in a home environment where Chinese is the primary language spoken. As a result, almost all of these students received very high scores on the district-wide performance test.

Chinese language schools, prior to the introduction of the district-wide performance test, concentrated on the achievement of students in language and culture. Now that the district-wide test is in place, many schools have extensively modified their curriculum to use the "Proficiency Guidelines" published by the American Council of Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) as a vehicle for attaining oral proficiency.

Conclusion

In the past, most of the students in Chinese language schools were enrolled at the elementary level. From the seventh grade on, students started to drop out of classes. Since Chinese language school students have been able to obtain credit from local school districts, the drop out rate in these districts has decreased considerably. Students are much more motivated to learn the Chinese language and culture and continue to study in Chinese language schools. By the time they reach college, many of these students have been in Chinese language schools for thirteen years. College teachers should be aware of the capabilities of these students and administer proper diagnostic tests for placement to foster a continuity in language learning for heritage students.

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Improving Chinese Language Schools: Issues and Recommendations

Shu-han Chou Wang

Over the last twenty to thirty years, Chinese language schools have thrived, even though their contributions have often been overlooked outside the community. They are a model of what the community and parents can achieve once they pool their resources together. Although most of the administrators and teachers are not language experts, they have been able to successfully establish and operate schools with various programs and levels of instruction. Few parents have the ability to teach their children the Chinese language consistently and systematically, much less the ability to teach the cultural and artistic skills that many Chinese language schools offer. It would be impossible for parents alone to instruct their children in the variety of programs offered. Chinese language schools make important contributions to the language capacity of our country, and the question now is how the existing education system can capitalize on the infrastructure already established by the Chinese language schools.

Chinese Language Schools as Linguistic and Cultural Resources

Chinese language schools perform a larger, more compelling role in Chinese immigrants' lives than language teaching or learning alone. Chinese language schools are also "loci of community, viability, creativity, and identity," as described by Fishman (1981) in his investigation of private, ethnic language schools. In this way, these schools have become both linguistic and cultural resources for the Chinese society. They fulfill the need for people to socialize regularly with others of similar ethnic backgrounds. Early immigrants had organizations such as "An-Liang Gong Hui" (An-Liang Chamber of Commerce) or "Taishan Tongxianghui" (Taishan Homeland Society) to turn to for friendship or even political protection. Later immigrants, those arriving after 1965, turned to Chinese language schools to teach their native language to their children and to maintain a sense of community. Chinese language schools have in a sense become extended families. Parents are not the only ones who feel the need to socialize. When students are asked why they go to Chinese language school, they will often answer "because I can see my friends," in addition to the typical response, "because my parents make me."

Providing a Valuable Learning Experience for Students

Although it is undeniable that Chinese language schools help children learn their language and culture, these students face problems that need to be recognized. For example, not enough attention is given to the problems caused by bilingualism. The fact is that most children in Chinese language schools experience difficulties in making language shifts between Chinese and English.

Students have to give up Saturday mornings or Sunday afternoons to go to Chinese language school. Few children enjoy this sacrifice, especially when attending the school is synonymous with homework and many tests. Studying the Chinese language requires extensive memorization and drudgery to build literacy. Coupled with the different mentalities and approaches of the teachers and schools, the tangible rewards of learning do not always seem to justify the difficulties. Children often do not see any reward for themselves. They believe they are sent to Chinese language schools because parents want to maintain their own contact with their Chinese roots. They also feel that their parents' expectations for performance are unrealistically high. Although parents expect their children to acquire English as native speakers, they will insist that they only require their children to know "basic Chinese." However, there is usually a discrepancy regarding what constitutes "basic Chinese." For example, a survey conducted at the Chinese School of Delaware showed that parents said they would be satisfied if their children could speak Chinese with any native speaker, understand Chinese movies or TV news, and read Chinese newspapers or magazines. Any professional in the language-teaching field would say that this range of activity is considered advanced or native-like proficiency rather than rudimentary Chinese, as claimed by the parents. In addition, in 1994, the College Board began offering the SAT II: Chinese. Suddenly the focus of every Chinese language school shifted to having students obtain high scores on the test. Unfortunately, this meant that Chinese language school students had additional expectations to meet.

Students at Chinese language schools may experience other kinds of pressures too. Because many Chinese language school teachers are educated outside the United States and trained in the memorization method, there is often a conflict between the students' learning styles and the teachers' teaching styles. As a result, students may feel that their studies lack clear objectives and motivation. These problems become even more complex when Chinese language schools' methodologies are examined in a sociocultural and psychological context. Younger children seldom question the need for Chinese language school, but adolescents often begin to ask why they have to go. For adolescents, dealing with bilingualism and biculturalism can be a heavy burden. The conflicts between the home culture and mainstream culture are real, and students' perceptions of self within their surroundings can be damaged.

Recommendations for Capitalizing on Chinese Language Schools' Wealth of Experience

Chinese language schools face questions regarding the balance between oral proficiency and reading/writing literacy. How to make sure that children continue to speak Chinese? How can literacy in reading and writing be enhanced without losing oral proficiency? How can a balance be achieved in developing the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the Chinese language? How much Chinese is enough? These questions suggest that Chinese language schools would be a gold mine for researchers. Research on how to improve the methodology and teaching of the four skills in Chinese would be extremely valuable. Research in the areas of self-concept and the mental health of Chinese-American children is also urgently needed, as are studies on learning characteristics and learner motivation.

Chinese language schools are eager to be part of the current educational reform movement for setting up content and performance standards. In particular, Chinese language schools need materials for speakers of Chinese that will combine factors such as oral proficiency and reading/writing literacy with learners' cognitive development and needs. Chinese language schools also need to become familiar with available textbooks, curriculum design, and current technology. The ultimate goal is to ensure that children enjoy learning both the Chinese language and culture, and to provide them with fond memories of Chinese language schools.

Cooperative Efforts with State and Local School Districts

In 1992, the Chinese School of Delaware applied for and obtained Carnegie Credit Units (credits based on contact hours) for its high school students. As a result, the Red Clay Consolidated School District invited the Chinese School of Delaware to be a partner in establishing a Chinese language program at John Dickinson High School. Currently, the program has been expanded to include two other schools. This experience shows that state and local school districts can cooperate with Chinese language schools.

School districts should explore a systematic way of awarding credits to high school students who study in Chinese language schools (see previous article). Chinese language schools, in turn, could open their doors to students whose ethnic backgrounds are not Chinese. Thus, many more students could study Chinese even when no Chinese courses are available in regular schools. By recognizing Chinese language schools, state and local school districts could offer Chinese without the problems related to funding, certification of teachers, and scheduling class time.

Other possibilities could include inviting a Chinese language school as a partner for establishing a Chinese-English bilingual program. There could be after-school clubs or classes in which students might learn either the language, the culture, or a combination of both. Chinese summer camps are already popular attractions. Another model could involve pairing a Chinese language school teacher as an assistant or paraprofessional with a certified social studies teacher. The former could teach the Chinese language, and the latter the culture. Any of these programs could generate significant interest for attracting prospective students. Once these programs become visible and accessible to all students in the community, the public might demand formal Chinese classes as part of the foreign language curriculum.

Teacher Training and Certification

Whether the issue is improving Chinese language schools or incorporating Chinese programs into the mainstream curriculum, teacher training and certification are the most crucial issues. The importance of teacher training programs cannot be overemphasized. Without certified teachers, the establishment of Chinese language courses in regular schools is out of the question, as is the possibility of expanding existing programs. The problem lies in the fact that most of the teachers in Chinese language schools are native Chinese, with no experience with the American education system. Although most of the teachers are not language experts, they are well educated, creative, and dedicated. They need training in language teaching theory, pedagogy, and assessment. Biculturalism for these teachers is essential; it is vital that they understand how the American education system works. This knowledge is indispensable because the teaching and promotion of the Chinese language and culture are occurring in the social and political contexts of the United States.

Conferences and Workshops

The requirements for teacher certification often prevent qualified would-be teachers from actually teaching. In addition, interested teachers are scattered throughout the country, which is why national and regional teacher training institutes are of fundamental importance. These institutes could provide the training these teachers need to meet the certification requirements. A high quality program would also raise standards for instruction and help in the creation of agreed-upon standards. It would be helpful if the various professional organizations and foundations consolidated their efforts on teacher training to develop teaching guidelines and training institutes for teachers. Local school district teacher training workshops and seminars should be open to the teachers of Chinese language schools. Unfortunately, many workshops currently require applicants to be "practicing teachers." It is important for practicing teachers to have opportunities for professional development, but it is equally important to train prospective teachers and help them become certified. Without new recruits, Chinese programs cannot grow.

Improving Consistency among Programs

Finally, the Chinese language field must take a critical look at the issues of articulation. Over the past decades, graduates of the Chinese language schools have been called "false beginners," a term that is now out of style because of its obvious negative connotations. As these students continue their study of Chinese in high school or college, it is vital for teachers to be better able to serve their needs. Because these children have attained a certain level of oral proficiency and literacy and are familiar with Chinese culture, their interests and abilities are very different from those students who are studying Chinese as a foreign language, often for the first time. When addressing the issues of equity and opportunity, the needs of these students cannot be ignored. More collaboration among Chinese language schools, college preparatory schools, and colleges is imperative to improve the consistency of their programs.

Keeping up with Research

In the meantime, Chinese language schools need to keep up with research in the areas of second language acquisition, self-concept, and ethnolinguistic studies in order to improve their pedagogy. Teachers and administrators must familiarize themselves with such matters as how the education system operates and what the current educational reform is. Active participation in professional conferences and workshops is also an indispensable means for acquiring new information, sharing available resources, and establishing links with other professionals in the field.

Conclusion

It is important to view Chinese language schools from the inside as well as from the outside. Their many contributions to education and to the society at large have been discussed and issues they face have been analyzed. Most important, the kind of collaboration possible between Chinese language schools and the formal education system has been delineated. In pursuing new directions, both Chinese language schools and the American education system will be better able to serve the needs of our future generations and help fulfill the language capacity of our nation.

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Optimizing Unique Opportunities for Learning

Martha Wang Gallagher

Chinese language schools are usually Saturday or Sunday schools designed to teach Chinese-American children Chinese language and culture. The parents of the great majority of the students are first generation immigrants from Greater China. Because the students in these schools are living in a "semi" Chinese language environment, they have a much greater exposure to spoken Chinese and Chinese characters than other students learning Chinese. Moreover, the mother tongue of some of these students is Chinese. As a result of such influences, these students possess unique characteristics. They have almost perfect tones and experience only limited pronunciation problems, mostly caused by dialectal influences from their parents. Thus, in the three problematic areas in Chinese language learning—pronunciation, tones, and remembering characters—these students have substantial advantages and are expected to attain greater achievements in Chinese language learning than their native English-speaking counterparts. In many cases, however, student achievement does not meet expectations. This paper will analyze the unique phenomena that occur in Chinese language schools and explore possible ways to promote higher achievements.

Dedicated Efforts and Mixed Results

Chinese language schools rely almost entirely on dedicated parent volunteers for teaching and administering the schools. These parents band together to provide their children (mostly American-born) an opportunity to learn formally the language they began acquiring at home from an early age. Without these schools, most of these children would not have any formal opportunities to learn Chinese until college. In addition, the schools provide students an opportunity to meet other Chinese children of similar backgrounds. This environment enables them to better understand and appreciate their Chinese-American identity. The schools also provide a supportive environment for immigrant parents. In this way, the schools are very effective in their role of preserving the ethnic heritage of first generation American-born Chinese and their families. Nevertheless, when examining the language learning results in these schools, three common phenomena can be identified that constitute challenging issues.

First, the speaking abilities of many students in Chinese language schools decline as the students grow older. High school students at Chinese language schools generally speak neither as fluently nor as accurately as they did when they first entered the school. Grammatical errors and English accents are common for these students. There are many factors that contribute to weakened speaking abilities, such as greater self-consciousness among teenagers, increased resentment of parental pressure to learn Chinese as children grow older, and declining motivation. In addition, the fact that speaking and grammar are not included in the standard Chinese language school curriculum is a critical factor.

Second, the number of students per class decreases as the courses become more advanced. The number of graduates is typically well below half the number of students who entered the school twelve years earlier. Student attrition can be partly attributed to the inevitable conflicts that develop with extracurricular activities at American schools and the relocation of families caused by changes in employment. However, it must be acknowledged that dwindling student interest as students get older is a major factor.

Third, the small number of students who do graduate from Chinese language schools after twelve years of study are mostly placed into second year Chinese courses in college. If we take the usual conversion rates in language learning (four years of language instruction in a middle school correspond to two years of high school, and two years of high school equal one year of college), then the eight years of Chinese language school from fifth to twelfth grade should be equivalent to three years of study in college. Although the contact hours are slightly less for the Chinese language school student, it could be argued that no credit has been given for the first five years of studies between kindergarten and fourth grade. Unfortunately for the graduates, being placed into a fourth year college Chinese course is very rare. In most cases, it is hard to reconcile the fact that twelve or thirteen years of Chinese language school suffice for students to be placed out of only one year of college Chinese. Undoubtedly, this is a contributing factor to declining student motivation. However, one of the critical reasons why Chinese language school graduates are unable to be placed higher is that their speaking and grammar skills are weak. As previously mentioned, these are the same two areas in language learning not included in the Chinese language school curriculum that contribute to students' declining speaking abilities as they advance in Chinese language school.

These three phenomena—declining speaking abilities, decreasing enrollments, and low college placements—have related origins. The following section explores ways to better utilize the Chinese language environment at home, improve teaching materials, and adopt more diversified teaching methods to solve these problems.

Taking Better Advantage of Opportunities in Chinese Language Schools

In terms of language learning, the natural advantages Chinese language school students start off with are undeniable. The dedication of the faculty and administration in Chinese language schools is unquestionable. The approaches for language learning in Chinese language schools outlined in this section are designed to make better utilization of these inherently positive factors, and to yield results equivalent to the outstanding achievements attained in Chinese language schools in other areas.

Utilizing the Environment

Utilizing the Chinese Language Environment at Home. Walton (1992) has noted that it is difficult for foreign students to acquire the linguistic code and to learn the way a language is used for interpersonal and interpretive intercultural communication in the case of the "true foreign languages" (noncognate to English, such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese). Because students at Chinese language schools are living in a semi-Chinese language speaking environment, it should be possible for them to overcome these hurdles relatively easily.

Before attending American schools, most Chinese language school students speak one of their parents' dialects as their mother tongue. Because Mandarin Chinese is the official dialect in China, and the most widespread as well, in most cases the students' mother tongue is Mandarin. Therefore, Mandarin Chinese is the language taught in most Chinese language schools. Assuming that parents continue speaking Chinese to their children (and are not afraid that doing so will hinder their development of English), a child's native speaking abilities should not be lost as he/she grows up. The most difficult linguistic codes in Chinese are certain sounds, tones, and measure words. Chinese students who have oral/aural experience at home easily master these and other Chinese linguistic codes. Furthermore, because Chinese students communicate in Chinese with their parents, sociolinguistic aspects of Chinese (such as how or what to say or not to say in a given situation) are not a separate learning issue. In this case, children acquire listening and speaking, two of the four language skills, quite naturally.

The acquisition of the other two skills, reading and writing, should be relatively easy because students already have a good foundation in listening and speaking. Moreover, as students acquire a native or near-native language competence through speaking and listening at home, the effort to learn grammar should be much less difficult. However, if parents do not continue to insist on speaking Chinese after their children enter American schools, the children's Chinese will naturally be influenced by English. Gradually these children will speak Chinese with an American accent and eventually their mother tongue will shift from Chinese to American English. Under these circumstances, when these children attend Chinese language school, rather than focusing primarily on learning reading and writing, they have to deal with all four language skills just like any other student who does not have a background in the language. Obviously it is a much more imposing task to acquire four skills than two.

Accommodating the American School Curriculum. In general, in the United States the amount of homework students have prior to fifth grade is relatively limited. Even if students have homework, it can usually be done within a relatively short period of time. In the lower grades, after-school sports and other programs have not yet become too demanding. If Chinese language schools could effectively utilize these five years by encouraging parents' cooperation in speaking Chinese at home, by the end of fifth grade students could already have formed a very strong native or near-native foundation in the Chinese language, especially in listening and speaking. To best utilize these first five years, children should be trained in standard pronunciations as soon as they start Chinese language school so that their pronunciation is not influenced exclusively by the dialect spoken by their parents. In first and second grade, students could be taught how to write characters in the correct stroke order. Within these five years, students could acquire the most frequently used vocabulary words, which would enable them to easily carry on conversations. Even though the students' vocabulary may be limited, they should have gained the basic language competence of native speakers. In other words, they would have obtained near-native accuracy in pronunciation, tones, and grammar. If parents would continue to insist on speaking Chinese with their children beyond these five years, the near-native competence in listening and speaking would be retained. Because of the strong foundation they would have acquired, students could concentrate on improving their reading and writing skills. In this case, even with a busy schedule, students should be better able to handle Chinese language school. Learning Chinese would no longer seem like such a burden to students if they felt less overwhelmed.

Curriculum

The Very First Task in Setting up a Curriculum Is to Select the Dialect to Be Taught. The linguistic codes of this "standard" dialect should be consistently reinforced in teaching. If "standard Mandarin" (biao-zhun guo-yu, pu-tong-hua, or Hanyu) is to be taught, the teaching materials and the pedagogy must be consistently based on the linguistic codes of standard Mandarin. Once standard Mandarin is selected, the knowledge of its linguistic codes, such as pronunciation and grammar, should be taught accordingly.

The Curriculum Should Include Instruction in Pronunciation and Grammar. Pronunciation drills should be included in the curriculum. Chinese students at Chinese language schools have few problems with tones. Furthermore, as noted earlier, tonal problems can be corrected easily. However, because of dialect influence from parents, systematic pronunciation errors are very common. The most common errors can be heard in missing or improperly applied retroflex sounds, in incorrectly using one sound of a sound group (substituting one of the following sounds with its counterpart: [in]\[ing], [en]\[eng], [an]\[ang], [l]\[n]\[r]), and in changing labial dental sound [f] into a bilabial sound. If "Mandarin" is what Chinese language schools claim to teach their students, then the pronunciation standard should be based on "Mandarin." Also, if Chinese language schools claim to be teaching Mandarin to their students, retroflex sounds should not be overlooked, and the differences between [in]\[ing], [en]\[eng], [an]\[ang], [l]\[n]\[r] should be properly addressed and practiced. It would not be proper to write the pronunciation of a word such as [zheng-sh], "formal" and yet actually have it pronounced [zeng-si] by the teachers. As for adopting one of the phonetic systems for Chinese, this has been a topic of heated discussion in recent years for political reasons. The nonalphabetical characteristic of "Zhu-yin Fu-hao" prevents students from being influenced by the predominant sound associations in English, which is an attractive feature. However, in order to be able to understand the names of people and places in China, and to be able to continue studying Chinese in college, learning the "Hanyu Pinyin" system is necessary. Because language is governed by the majority of a speech community, it is not clear to what extent it is necessary or even possible for some Chinese language schools to adopt the well-accepted "Pinyin" system.

Grammar teaching should be included in the curriculum. The myth that Chinese has no grammar is still widely circulated in Chinese language schools. Furthermore, many people believe that because parents and teachers at Chinese language schools are Chinese, students should naturally "know how" to put words together. Therefore, they believe there is no need to teach Chinese grammar. For this very reason, students often miss subtle grammatical distinctions in sentences. Moreover, because of a lack of training in grammar, oral expression becomes increasingly difficult, and gradually students become unwilling to speak in class. The result is, once again, a decline in speaking abilities.

The Content of the Teaching Materials Should Be Correlated to the Students' Intellectual Development. Currently, most of the textbooks used in Chinese language schools are from the series *Hua-Yu*, a language textbook series designed for overseas Chinese and published in Taiwan. Occasionally a few schools choose to adopt the *Guo-Yu*, the textbooks used in Taiwan for native speakers. In the latter case, because of the limited number of contact hours (usually one to three hours per week), Chinese language schools cannot possibly cover the whole book in one semester as do the schools in Taiwan, but generally require a full academic year. Because the same sequence is still followed, the content of the books inevitably does not correspond to the students' development. The same phenomenon also occurs for the *Hua-Yu* series. Inappropriately childish contents (on the level of "The little yellow dog barks and the little spotted cat jumps") cannot hold the interest of an eleven- or twelve-year-old American student.

The Contents of the Teaching Materials Should Be Related to Life Experience. In recent years, the teaching materials used in colleges and other language schools have been adapted to reflect real-life situations. However, the contents of the textbooks that Chinese language schools use are often unrelated to students' daily life. Unless the parents insist on speaking Chinese with their children, it is almost impossible for students to communicate in Chinese with other people on the basis of their Chinese language school education alone. This fact naturally is a great discouragement to the students who work hard, and it certainly contributes to reducing their interest in learning Chinese.

There is an urgent need for modern textbooks (preferably accompanied by audiovisual and/or computer-aided materials). The contents of these textbooks should be relevant to American students' daily life and should correspond to the maturity levels of the students. The task of creating such new materials would have to be a cooperative effort on the part of institutes in foreign language education, associations of Chinese language schools, and experienced teachers. Furthermore, such a project should have professional guidance to ensure quality and accuracy in language pedagogy. Because language involves listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the teaching materials should include the full development of all four skills. Colleges today are challenged by the varying backgrounds of students who received some Chinese language school education. Because the backgrounds of the students are so diverse, it is very hard for colleges to accommodate each individual. Language teachers and students at every level would benefit tremendously from the development of a new series of Chinese textbooks. Certainly these standardized teaching materials would eliminate a lot of problems in placing students from one school into the proper course in another school.

Teaching Methods

In recent years, the philosophy of "Whole Language Learning" has had a great impact on the education system throughout the United States. Courtney Cazden (1991) characterizes Whole Language Learning as an approach in which "children learn what they live, what they hear and try to speak, in a context of meaningful, functional use with people who care about them and have confidence that they will learn" (p. 8). The results of this approach, as well as the approach itself, have caused heated debates among educators. However, some of the principles of this approach are very applicable to foreign language learning. The following principles of Whole Language Learning can be effectively applied in foreign language learning:

- classroom learning should be student centered;
- students learn better when they can do;
- students should actively participate;
- learning should be by talking and doing in a social context;
- learning should be kept functional, interesting, and meaningful;
- learning is best in a natural environment setting.

Keeping these principles in mind, the following concerns regarding Chinese language learning should be carefully examined:

Student Interest. In general, students attend Chinese language school once a week, and the contact time is only one to three hours per week. Teachers have a lot of material to cover during this limited time: They must review common errors on completed assignments, teach a new lesson, emphasize any points that deserve special attention, and usually give students a test (to ensure that students study). Under these circumstances, classroom activities easily fall into the pattern where the teacher is merely informing the students. Furthermore, the activities that do take place remain for the most part restricted to reading and writing. In other words, the learning is neither student centered, experiential, nor reflective. As a result, students gradually lose interest.

Uneven and Incomplete Approaches with Regard to Homework. Because contact time is limited, student progress must depend heavily on the completion of regular homework assignments. However, the two most popular textbooks, *Hua-Yu* and *Guo-Yu*, are accompanied by a very limited number of exercises. Thus, creating weekly homework exercises becomes the teacher's responsibility. In spite of the hard work the teachers put in, their uneven training in teaching Chinese as a foreign language and their varied educational backgrounds mean that the pedagogical value of homework ranges widely. However, the homework shares one feature in that it is designed to improve reading and writing skills (writing as in the practice of composition).

Students' Self-reliance. Another significant limitation of Chinese language school homework is that it can rarely be completed without help from parents. Nowadays it is common for both parents to have full-time jobs. By the time they come home following a busy day at work, it is often already six or seven o'clock in the evening, and parents may not have a lot of time or patience to help their children with their Chinese homework. Moreover, if children have forgotten some of what they learned earlier (material that appears to be very easy to the parents), the parents' patience may be severely tested. An unpleasant learning environment of this nature may add to a child's resentment toward learning Chinese.

Whole Language Principles. The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are not appropriately balanced in the Chinese language school curriculum. The textbooks that are used were originally designed for students in Taiwan. Because students in Taiwan are living in the language environment, they hear and speak Chinese every day naturally, so clearly they have already acquired competence in the Chinese language. Obviously, the authors and editors addressing students in this environment do not think it necessary to include listening and speaking in their curriculum. Whole Language Learning advocates support the inclusion of these skills, even for native students. If teachers at Chinese language schools are unaware of the importance of developing listening and speaking skills and continue to approach teaching exactly as the textbooks indicate, these two skills will remain seriously underdeveloped. Students whose family environment does not provide practice in spoken Chinese especially need language labs and audiovisual facilities. Lacking these, only reading and writing skills can be covered adequately. Even when the two skills are mastered at a superior level, the achievement is only partial because language learning is based on all four skills.

External Constraints. Most Chinese language schools do not have their own school building. Instead they rent a public school or a church for the weekend. Because of the restrictions inherent in such arrangements (e.g., teachers and students may be forbidden to touch anything in the classroom) as well as the shortage of funding, facilities are extremely limited. There is no modern equipment for language learning, such as audiovisual labs, and it is impossible to set up a Whole

Language Learning environment in the rented space. For various reasons, field trips and other activities are almost unheard of. Language learning again falls into the one-way-street mode: the teacher teaches several characters per week to the students. Except for reading the book, the students rarely see or hear those words anywhere else.

Home Setting. Finally, a unique aspect regarding the overall environment and atmosphere in Chinese language school learning is the lack of teacher support by parents. Chinese language school teachers often dedicate far greater time and energy than professors teaching similar courses in college. Yet these teachers can be subjected to considerable pressure from parents who believe they are experts at teaching Chinese simply because they are native speakers. This type of interference contributes to the high turnover among teachers, a trend that also hinders curriculum improvement and continuity.

Suggestions for Improving Teaching Methods

Based in part on Whole Language Learning principles, the following suggestions in language pedagogy for Chinese language schools can be made:

Emphasizing Greater Support at Home. The Chinese language school teacher should have a parent-teacher meeting very early in the term to obtain parental support for Chinese learning and to give specific suggestions for providing a Chinese language environment for their children. The teacher should insist that parents speak Chinese to their children. The teacher can also suggest other ways parents can efficiently utilize their time with their children to support Chinese learning. For example, the teacher could suggest that parents ask their child to read the Chinese textbook while they are preparing dinner; that parents have children do their Chinese homework while they are reading the mail or the newspaper, or paying bills; that they utilize time together in an automobile by asking questions on Chinese studies; that they listen to Chinese tapes when getting up in the morning and during other activities that do not require full concentration.

Improving Classroom Environment. When possible, the classroom should contain Chinese language- and culture-related materials, books, posters, periodicals, pictures, paintings, and other artifacts to stimulate the students' interests. Teachers may have to bring these materials and set them up each week. Teachers should insist that they and the students speak Chinese exclusively during class.

Developing a Curriculum That Includes Listening and Speaking. The curriculum should regularly include activities that require students to develop oral skills, such as oral reports, speeches, skits, discussions, and debates. Furthermore, tests should contain listening and speaking components. Homework should include listening to tapes and watching videotapes, and there should be reinforcement of these materials in class.

Providing Homework Materials That Encourage the Student to Be Self-reliant. Homework should be constructed so that students can do it without parental help. For example, it should include a glossary at the back of all words that students may not know, so that they must first try to read the characters before looking them up.

Introducing Multiple Sources of Learning. Field trips should be incorporated into the curriculum, such as museum trips, temple visits, and Chinese music concerts. Speakers can be invited to give presentations on topics such as tea ceremonies, calligraphy, character etymology, painting, and other related language and cultural topics.

Making Chinese a Living Language. Teachers should create opportunities to use Chinese outside the classroom. Students could be required to call the teacher and/or a classmate and speak in Chinese. Chinese hours, visits to the teacher's or a classmate's house where only Chinese will be spoken, should be encouraged. Students could also write and receive birthday cards in Chinese, make posters, and make up games in Chinese.

Summary

Chinese language school students have a great advantage over other students learning Chinese in that they have access to a Chinese language environment in which they can frequently hear Chinese and, if they want, speak Chinese often. Deliberate steps need to be taken to optimally utilize and enhance such an environment. Teachers and parents together need to recognize the importance of providing maximum opportunities for listening and speaking Chinese. The Chinese language school curriculum should be adapted to ensure efficient and balanced learning of all four language skills. Homework should also reinforce all four skills, and be designed so that students can complete it on their own. Learning Chinese could then be a pleasant and satisfying experience for students, comparable to their favorite subjects in the American school system. In this way, native or near-native Chinese language competence could be achieved by most of the students in Chinese language schools.

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Forging a Link: Chinese Heritage Community Language Schools and the Formal Education System

A Case Study

Xueying Wang

The globalization of economies, trade, and communication as well as new political and strategic concerns are triggering an acute need for the improvement of America's capacity in cross-cultural communication. At the same time, immigration, census, and demographic data indicate that approximately three hundred languages other than English are spoken in the United States, suggesting a critical need for cross-cultural communication competence in the domestic context. In response to these expanding global and domestic requirements for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication, as Brecht and Walton have recently pointed out (Brecht and Walton, 1995; Brecht, with Caemmerer and Walton 1995), these opportunities have created a demand for language study in more languages, by more learners with more diverse backgrounds, needs, and motivations, for an ever more diverse set of language communication tasks and purposes.

Although the public education system continues to focus on teaching the three major European languages, French, German, and Spanish, the last decade has seen the entry of several less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), primarily Chinese and Japanese, into the educational mainstream. College and university enrollments in these languages have rapidly increased. However, attrition rates in the LCTLs are high, and the place of these languages within the formal education system remains tenuous, particularly at the K–12 level.

Outside the public education system, heritage language communities across the country struggle to preserve their native languages through family life and community-based weekend and afternoon schools, which currently offer instruction in a number of languages important for global and domestic language needs. Although often ignored in policy formulations on the nation's language needs and capacity, heritage community language schools most likely represent the single largest and potentially most valuable resource for meeting the language and cultural communication needs of the new domestic and international order. Heritage community language school students have a significant head start in languages other than English and usually have little or no accent. This head start is particularly valuable for many non-European languages that can require of native English speakers as much as four times more study contact time to reach equivalent levels of language competence than is required for cognate European languages (Walton 1987, 1992, 1995).

It is important and desirable that native-English speakers study and learn LCTLs, but this need should not overshadow the equally important necessity to preserve the heritage languages. The development of a capacity for teaching and learning critical languages within heritage communities is vital for meeting the immediate language needs of the United States. The long-term development of heritage language competence should ideally be promoted not only through community and community school efforts, but also within the formal education system wherever and whenever possible. Although it is unrealistic to expect that all of the heritage languages in the United States can be taught in the formal education system, particularly in an era of shrinking resources in the public school sector, there is nevertheless a growing belief that the language instruction efforts of the heritage community language schools should be better coordinated with the formal education system.

Background of Chinese Language Schools

Before exploring the links between the Chinese language school system and the formal education system, it would be useful to present a brief overview of the Chinese language schools, because they often are unfamiliar to language educators and the public. The goal of these schools is to ensure the preservation of the native language and culture of their students through the study of literature, history, geography, song, dance, and painting. However, the primary focus of Chinese language schools is language instruction, particularly mastering the written language and promoting literacy in the language.

As described in the previous articles of this volume, these schools are staffed by the students' parents (with little or no financial compensation), who may be well educated but untrained in formal language instruction. The schools are generally well organized and usually include a school board, an administrative staff, and a principal. Arrangements are usually made with local public schools or churches for the use of classroom space on weekends or after school.

Typical heritage language students begin the acquisition of their heritage language skills in the home. When these children enter the formal education system, English soon dominates their communication outside the home. When the families in the community recognize that their children may not maintain their heritage language, they often send them to the Chinese language school as soon as they reach an appropriate age. If no Chinese language school exists locally, families often seek to establish one for their children.

These schools exist outside the formal education system and must find their own resources. Increasingly, teachers and administrators are asking for help in teacher training*, establishing curricula based on sound linguistic and pedagogical principles, designing instructional materials, and setting standards for assessment. Chinese language schools need additional resources and expertise to improve their programs. In addition, just as their counterparts in the formal education system, they are eager to make use of new instructional technologies, from computer-based learning to multimedia, and telecommunications technologies that can be used for language learning. Most important, for those languages not available in the public school system, heritage community language schools need to find ways to hold on to their students through the teenage years so that these young people can take advantage of the opportunities for advanced study in colleges and universities that offer their languages.

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Contrasting the Public School System and the Chinese Language School System

The learning of Chinese serves as an interesting case study of the larger heritage language preservation effort in the United States. Formal instruction in Chinese has been available for decades at large colleges and universities. Since the early 1980s, Chinese language instruction has increasingly moved into smaller universities, colleges, community colleges, and the public school system. Traditionally, these institutions in the formal education system have focused on teaching Chinese as a foreign language to native English speakers, even though data clearly indicate that many, and in some cases, most of the students in these language programs are of Chinese heritage. Simultaneously, Chinese language schools are offering instruction to preserve Chinese as a heritage language, outside of the formal education system. Table 2 illustrates the differences between the two systems.

Table 2: Comparison of the Two Systems

	Public School System	Chinese Language School System
Goals	- Communication: emphasis on four skills. - More than one language offered.	- Preserve language and culture: emphasis on literacy. - One language offered primarily for heritage students.
Teachers	- Full-time/part-time paid. - Professionally trained. - Usually certified.	- Usually parent volunteers, low pay. - Limited training. - Usually not certified.
Administrators	- Paid career position.	- Parent volunteers, no salary.
Students	- Non-Chinese heritage & Chinese heritage students. - Similar age. - Choice of language. - Usually start learning at older age than Chinese heritage language students.	- Primarily Chinese heritage language students. - Large range of ages in one class. - No choice of language. - Start learning at preschool age.
Parents	- Limited role. - Usually not speakers of the language taught. - Of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.	- Active role. - Usually speakers of the language taught. - Of same cultural and linguistic background.
Programs	- For credit. - Part of curriculum, may be required by school district. - English-speaking environment.	- Not for credit. - Extracurricular, not required by school district, may be required by parents. - Authentic linguistic and cultural environment of the language taught.
Schedule	- Weekdays during regular school hours.	- After school or on weekends.
Teaching Methods	- Taught as foreign language.	- Taught as both heritage language and second/foreign language depending on students.
Textbooks	- Typically not from home country. - Targeted to English speakers.	- Usually from home country. - Targeted to native speakers.
Testing/Assessment	- Affects GPA/graduation credit.	- No effect on GPA/graduation credit.
Resources	- Taxes (public money). - Access to other school resources (i.e., library, language labs, computers). - Own building.	- Donations, tuition, & funding from home country. - No access to other resources. - No permanent space (i.e., must rent classroom).

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Heritage Community Language Schools Language Instruction: Issues and Concerns

Because The National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) has already conducted extensive research on issues relating to Chinese language instruction in the formal educational system (Moore, 1992), the following section focuses on the issues and concerns in the heritage community language school system. To improve language teaching and learning at Chinese language schools in the United States, the NFLC, assisted by representatives from the Chinese language community, conducted preliminary research on specific instructional concerns that exist in Chinese language schools. Research methods included telephone surveys, interviews, and meetings with focus groups. The issues and concerns fell into six major groups: professional expertise, credit transfer, instructional materials, curriculum, teaching methodology, and testing and assessment. The first two topics are the result of direct observation during site visits, whereas the last four are based on the survey results. The findings of this limited research follow:

The Need for Professional Pedagogical Expertise in Chinese Language Schools

Despite a large and increasing number of Chinese language schools, the extraordinary number of students enrolled in these schools, and the contributions of these schools to education in this country, the majority of teachers are not professional language teachers and do not have formal training in language teaching theories and methodologies. However, this lack of professional status for Chinese language school teachers should not be seen as diminishing their strengths, accomplishments, or sense of commitment. According to the 1995 survey conducted by the National Council of Associations of the Chinese Language Schools, approximately eighty percent of the Chinese language school teachers have a bachelor's degree, and twenty percent hold either a master's or doctorate degree. Seventy-five percent of them have majored in the sciences and twenty-five percent in the arts and humanities. More than seventy percent of heritage community language school teachers surveyed received their degrees in the United States.

There is a widespread assumption that the majority of Chinese language school instructors teach students using a "home-country" model as if the schools were still located in the home country. This instructional approach may not seem appropriate for Chinese heritage learners living in the United States. However, a new and different way to teach Chinese would require an innovative approach to teacher training and professional development.

Although Chinese language school teachers are eager to obtain professional training, most traditional education programs are both inaccessible and inappropriate for the heritage community language schools, in part because language school teachers lack the time to attend the training programs designed for those career teachers. Chinese language school teachers typically have full-time nonlanguage professional jobs in addition to their teaching responsibilities. Moreover, in-service education programs are inappropriate for these teachers for the following additional reasons. First, teacher training programs typically emphasize training in the target language and culture; Chinese language school teachers already have this background. Second, programs are typically for teachers of non-Chinese heritage students, whose needs for language and culture training are different from those of Chinese heritage students. Finally, traditional programs prepare teachers to teach only in the formal education system; they do not address the different characteristics of heritage community language schools, including goals and sociocultural factors. The teachers in the two systems have different needs for professional development, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of Teacher Training Programs

Traditional Teacher Training Program	Chinese Language Teacher Training Program
Trainees, native and nonnative teachers, teach the target language as a foreign language.	Trainees, all native speakers, teach the target language as a heritage language.
Trainees teach grammar and all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.	Trainees teach literacy and culture with less emphasis on grammar and the acquisition of language skills.
Trainees become full/part-time career language professionals.	Trainees become noncareer language preservation experts.
Training geared to specific age level of each class.	Trainees teach students from four years old to adult, sometimes in the same class.
Trainees teach mostly nonheritage students.	Trainees teach mostly heritage students.

Credit Transfer from Chinese Language Schools to the Formal Education System

Heritage language school students who dedicate years to the study and development of proficiency in Chinese rarely receive academic credit from secondary schools or universities. Instead, if their language is offered in the formal education system, heritage students are often required to enroll in the introductory courses, because of the lack of adequate resources to support higher levels of instruction. When heritage students are placed in language classes that are too elementary for their existing language skills, they may frighten away non-Chinese heritage students. This situation can end up wasting both the learner's and the teacher's time, as well as precious school resources. Moreover, by combining all heritage students in a special track, which happens on occasion, neither the needs of less competent students nor the needs of stronger Chinese heritage students are addressed. If there are language requirements for graduation and the students' home language is not offered, the students may end up taking a third language, such as Spanish or French, thus surrendering years of investment in their home language.

There is a pressing need for research to determine what procedures might be either established or adopted by local school boards, school districts, and state educational agencies, to award heritage students credit in a systematic manner for language study in heritage community language schools. One mechanism might be the establishment of fieldwide or nationwide standardized exams to test the proficiency of heritage students and ensure credit transfer where appropriate.

Instructional Materials

Approximately eighty-five experienced teachers and administrators in Chinese language schools participated in a survey relating to instructional materials. All geographical areas of the country were surveyed, with a stronger focus on the East and West Coasts. The results suggest that textbook materials, as within the formal education system, are perceived as the greatest pedagogical problem in Chinese language instruction.

Several sets of textbooks that are currently in use by the Chinese language schools are published in either the People's Republic of China or Taiwan. The recurring complaint is that these textbooks are not relevant to students' daily life in the United States. Most of the textbooks do not address the age of learners or the bicultural environment in which they are growing up. Some of the textbooks are produced for native Chinese students in Greater China rather than for American-Chinese students. The failure to relate the instructional materials to the learners' cultural identities seems to have an even greater impact as students grow older (grades seven through twelve), and may contribute to the high attrition rate among adolescents. Consequently, some teachers stated that they use supplementary materials to make the textbook materials more relevant.

The survey participants reported that the materials intended for younger children are acceptable in terms of content, but become less appropriate for older children. However, the language skill level required by the books is too high for the younger children, and the vocabulary and terminology taught are too complex. This makes the materials more difficult to assimilate in earlier grades. Several participants also pointed out that the vocabulary introduced in the earlier levels is too difficult for the younger students to write. There was also criticism that newly introduced vocabulary in the text does not reappear later on to reinforce learning, nor are these words or characters compared with vocabulary similar in sound or appearance. Although some textbooks are accompanied by supplemental materials, most teachers feel that these are insufficient. The majority of the teachers raised concerns about the lack of instructional strategies for optimal use of these materials.

Some teachers felt that the material presented in the textbooks should be in a more conversational, oral language style, more familiar to students, and more relevant to their knowledge of the language. They suggested that this lack of conversational Chinese in textbooks is one of the reasons why these materials may seem boring to many students, and even to some teachers. At the same time, a small percentage of the teachers felt that the textbooks were inadequate for teaching students solid writing skills and expressed the need for workbooks with more writing practice that the students could use as part of their homework. Finally, some teachers pointed out that the textbooks were designed for full-time students and have not been adapted for weekend or after-school instruction.

Other Concerns

A somewhat smaller sample of teachers/administrators participated in telephone and personal interviews, as well as in focus groups addressing curriculum design, teaching methodology, and testing/assessment. Some problems identified are similar to those of the formal education system, while other problems are unique to Chinese language schools. Following is a brief summary of these findings:

Curriculum

- place more emphasis on combining Chinese language with Chinese culture
- design the curriculum to ensure better coherence in the sequence of teaching materials
- establish clear goals for the purpose of learning the language
- define specific objectives regarding student performance at each grade level
- address the needs of students with different levels of Chinese, including those who have no Chinese background
- focus on communication
- aim at building the four language skills
- develop listening and speaking skills before reading and writing, rather than concentrate on developing and integrating all skills simultaneously
- address sociocultural needs of the Chinese heritage students
- offer sufficient variety in course selection
- promote interest in meaningful communication
- be goal oriented

Teaching Methodology

- tailor teaching methods to meet the unique needs of Chinese heritage students
- make classrooms less teacher centered; promote student participation/interaction
- encourage self-managed learning to prepare students for lifelong learning
- utilize available instructional technology to the advantage of students and teachers
- reduce unnecessary memorization and recitation
- improve balance between building oral proficiency and reading and writing skills
- place more emphasis on the form of the language, e.g., on how to speak, read, and write correctly
- emphasize the use of language in homework
- be more familiar with American culture and be able to understand the students' bicultural world
- take into consideration prior knowledge and cognitive abilities of students
- teach students how to prepare in advance for the class
- use Chinese in discussions among students in class

Testing and Assessment

- develop new evaluation tools suitable for Chinese language schools
- simplify test format and items to reduce student frustration in test taking
- use testing/assessment as a tool for diagnosing students' difficulties, not just for measuring the mastery of language skills
- measure students against standards, not against each other
- test students on the use of language rather than memorized materials
- realize the limitations of Advanced Placement tests and SAT II as the only accredited measures of performance, which do not apply to the majority of young heritage students

- establish standards for measuring progress in students' language abilities
- establish standards for evaluation of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
- establish guidelines and principles for the design of tests

Forging a Link Between the Two Systems: Common Issues

The teaching and learning of Chinese in the formal education system and in Chinese language schools could theoretically be seen as two independent undertakings where improvements can be attempted separately in each system. However, because both systems share so much in the way of instructional needs and teaching expertise and because students typically move between the systems, it would seem beneficial to all involved to forge a more systematic link between them.

Professional Development

Teachers in both systems need professional training to improve their instructional techniques. Although the formal education system is known for its rich resources for such services, teachers in both systems must overcome many obstacles in order to attend traditional teacher training programs, essentially because of time constraints. Programs that require a week or two in the summer, or that require commuting to a local school education program on a college campus can be quite strenuous for teachers. This is especially true for the parent-teachers in the Chinese language school system, because they are at the same time full-time working parents and noncareer language teachers.

A fresh approach to this problem involves two components: the first is the development of focused "modules" on specific training topics, rather than long "one-size-fits-all" courses, and the second is to deliver these modules directly to the teachers at convenient times and locations such as at school or in the home through distance learning technologies (Richard Brecht and Ronald Walton, 1995). Today's technologies, which are constantly changing and improving, would allow these modules to be delivered through the Internet and the World Wide Web. Completion of a specific number of independent modules could be counted as a course. The teachers could select the modules they are most interested in and complete enough modules to qualify for course credit if they wish. It seems that this approach would come closer to addressing the specific training needs of all teachers. Moreover, this approach would allow teachers to work at their own pace and avoid the strains of travel, commuting, and the disruption of family life as is often the case with summer programs.

Ideally, this alternative on-line, modularized training program would facilitate and be complemented by an equally fresh approach to a language teacher "certification" system. Unlike the traditional certification system intended for full-time career language teachers, this teacher certification model would recognize a range of teaching competencies, and would strive for an achievable and realistic minimum certification level. This model would also provide a ladder of higher certification levels for teachers willing to invest more time and effort into this enterprise. In this proposed ladder system, the highest certification level would qualify teachers to become teacher trainers. Indeed, a system like this would be useful not only for the heritage language teachers but for language teachers in the K–12 formal education system. To establish such an alternative program that addresses teacher training in both the K–12 and heritage systems, the following issues need to be considered:

- Do the two systems require similar expertise for professional qualification?

- What are the professional areas in which teacher trainers in both systems need development?

- Could the teachers be certified by examination? If yes, who will develop those tests, especially the tests for the heritage school teachers? How can such tests be adopted by national language organizations, school districts, or boards of education for professional purposes?

Instructional Materials/Curriculum Design

This issue seems to be an ideal area of cooperation between Chinese language schools and the formal education system. As the NFLC survey of Chinese language teaching in the formal education system (Moore, 1992) and the recent survey of the heritage community language school system revealed, Chinese teachers in both systems are dissatisfied with their instructional materials; this is especially true for teachers in the heritage sector. The instructional materials from Greater China are usually not appropriate for young Chinese learners living in the United States, because they are designed for the Chinese education system, whereas the Chinese language school students spend most of their time in the American education system. Being exposed to two education systems and two systems of pedagogical practice can confuse young learners. Teachers in the formal education system have experience in instructional materials design and language pedagogy that would be useful for Chinese language school teachers. Chinese language school teachers have experience teaching students language skills for realistic and authentic everyday communication, and have more direct access to authentic learning environments and materials. It makes sense to combine the expertise of these two systems in the development of curriculum design and instructional materials. If this were to happen, the "articulation problem" between the two systems would be greatly mitigated. To bring the two systems together to combine their complementary expertise, it would seem necessary to address the following issues:

- What steps can be taken to assess more accurately students' language ability so that they can be placed at the appropriate level of instruction?

- What sort of curriculum design is needed to meet the needs of students with such varied backgrounds?

- How can instructional materials be developed to address the special strengths and needs of heritage students?

- Because heritage students are in both systems, how can the issues referred to here be effectively addressed within both systems to ensure effective language learning?

Sharing Resources

The mission of heritage community language schools would be difficult to replicate within the formal education system and vice versa. In the heritage community language school system, language instruction itself is deeply embedded within an overriding cultural context that places a very special emphasis on cultural values, particularly as they relate to family life. On the other hand, the formal education system offers a set of rewards and incentives for language study that are not necessarily part of the heritage community language schools. The clearer the missions of both systems become, the clearer the nature of viable links between the two systems.

There is an obvious need to promote better communication between the two systems. At the lowest level, this could take the form of local and regional newsletters or electronic bulletin boards. At a higher level, there is obviously a need for mechanisms that could bring teachers together to share resources and combine expertise. This sharing could take the form of meetings/forums; task forces focused on particular issues; or joint projects, such as those aimed at teacher training, materials development, and testing and evaluation. Coordination between the two systems would allow language students in the formal education system to have access to the authentic language and cultural environment of heritage community language schools. It would also allow students from heritage community language schools to receive language instruction appropriate to their language abilities in the formal education system. More importantly, because heritage students continuously move between these two systems, better articulation would certainly lead to a clearer and more effective path for developing language competence.

To identify strategies for sharing resources between the two systems, it would be useful to consider the following questions:

- How can students in the formal education system take advantage of the rich authentic language and cultural environment of the heritage community language school system?
- How can the expertise in teaching methodology, materials development, curriculum design, and testing and assessment, characteristic of the formal education system, be adopted by the heritage system?
- How can administrators and teachers from the two systems be brought together to share and build on each other's expertise?

Testing/Assessment

Although the new SAT II: Chinese can be used by both the Chinese language schools and the formal education system, it is primarily aimed at college-bound students in their junior and senior high school year. Meanwhile, there are some Chinese language school students who may have been taking Chinese for nine or ten years, and even students in the formal education system, who need ongoing assessment long before they take the SAT II exam, if they choose to take it at all. A concern expressed at a forum on improving the link between Chinese language schools and the formal education system, sponsored by the NFLC in November 1995, is that heritage learners need a system of standardized goals and outcomes, monitored through a rich assessment system aimed at courses by year and level. Standardized testing ideally should be employed at all schools in both systems. Testing and assessment would naturally be a significant component of the teacher training/professional development enterprise noted here. Thus, several pressing questions arise as to testing and assessment:

- Is there a need in both systems for a new effort at developing diagnostic achievement tests that assess individual student progress and need?

- Is there a need in both systems for a standardized test to measure students' language gains on a national scale, at levels below the current SAT II: Chinese test?

- Is there a need for a special testing format and tests aimed directly at heritage learners, distinct from tests designed for native English speakers?

Issues of Motivation and Retention of Students

Research conducted by the NFLC has revealed that the issue of learner motivation is perhaps the most pressing concern for heritage community language schools. It is known that Chinese learners begin to leave the heritage community language system in large numbers at the onset of adolescence, around the middle-school years. Yet, many of these same learners reappear later in college programs. Enrollment data for both the Chinese heritage community language school and formal education systems clearly support this observation. The question of how to motivate the Americanized Chinese students to continue to study Chinese (to prevent the loss of their language ability during the five- to six-year hiatus) has been haunting educators in the heritage community language school system for many years. Improved teacher training, materials, curriculum design, along with standardized outcomes and assessment procedures, would all be likely to motivate heritage learners to continue their study.

More importantly, a smoother transition from heritage community language schools to the formal education system is critical to maintain motivation. Chinese heritage learners with considerable language proficiency will certainly not be motivated by a curriculum that does not recognize and build upon their past study and existing language abilities. Not being able to take Chinese because it is not offered for credit, but having to choose among French, Spanish, and German in high school certainly curbs the motivation of the Chinese heritage learner. One can be sure that this message is transmitted to younger learners in heritage community language schools and can bridle motivation. Overall, motivation is one of the key challenges facing heritage language learners around the country. Addressing the following issues should be of concern to both systems:

- How can the two systems collaborate to conduct research on how best to maximize motivation and, thus, minimize attrition rates in each system?

- How can the two systems cooperate to create incentives to promote the language growth of students beyond the school years?

- How can the two systems collaborate on developing a system for awarding credits to students who study language in the heritage community language schools?

Instruction for Non-Chinese Heritage Learners

Many heritage community language schools attempt to be true "community" schools by opening their doors to students outside the Chinese community. Some schools now offer instruction for those who want to study Chinese as a foreign language. This expansion to a new clientele is beneficial for obtaining local community support, to help educate the non-Chinese community about Chinese culture, and to serve as a valuable resource for Chinese language learning (because Chinese is rarely offered in high schools and even more rarely in middle and elementary schools). However, the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language has not been part of the traditional mission of Chinese language schools, and this approach opens new instructional concerns such as pedagogical approach, materials, classroom teaching, and curriculum design, areas where the formal education system has more expertise. The possibility of serving this new clientele raises the following questions:

- How can the local public schools collaborate with heritage community language school teachers to offer language instruction to students who have no other access to the study of Chinese?

- How can the formal education system assist heritage community language schools in terms of teaching methodologies, curriculum design, materials development, and testing and assessment with regard to the teaching of non-Chinese students?

Conclusion

Two distinct systems of language instruction appear to be at work in the United States: the formal education system and the heritage community language schools. Although there are some differences in goals and instructional delivery, there are enormous similarities as well. The common denominator is surely the teaching and learning of a language and culture in formal educational environments complete with teachers, classrooms, textbooks, and tests. Therefore, it is vital for the two systems to gain an understanding of each other for the benefit of all language students.

The goals are twofold: to explore the benefits each system can obtain from a collaboration with the other, and to identify strategies for implementing future collaboration. Specific objectives could include the following: 1) conduct thorough research on the needs, concerns, and issues of language instruction in the two systems, with particular emphasis on the heritage language sector, where little research has been conducted; 2) develop a strategy for collaborating and sharing experience and expertise between the two systems; 3) propose model curricula within heritage community language schools, middle/high schools, and universities based on this research; 4) develop these models with clear links to the local language and cultural community; 5) pilot and assess these models for feasibility and outcomes; 6) examine the policy and substantive issues that a true integration between the formal education system and heritage community language school system would entail; and 7) disseminate these models to other language settings nationwide.

From all the work the NFLC has done so far with the heritage language communities in the United States and with the formal education system, it is clear that the issue of collaboration between the two systems is extremely complex, especially with regard to implementing future linkages in a systematic way. There exists no body of literature on the subject, no studies to refer to, no experts to consult, no manual to provide guidance in the United States; this is largely an unexplored educational arena. In sum, the task of fostering this link will be challenging and will unquestionably require the formulation of new national language education policies, and improved strategies for implementing these policies. It is hoped that this publication, and others, will trigger national attention on the need for a new era of collaborative, collective work between the heritage communities and mainstream educational institutions aimed at immediate and long-term improvements in the learning and teaching of Chinese.

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